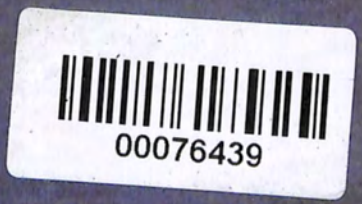
00076439

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016

THE

DEERSLAYER:

A TALE.

76439

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS," "THE PATH-FINDER," "THE PIONEERS," AND "THE PRAIRIE."

"What Terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind."

GRAY.

HX-1-37

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

K-C 408

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1841.

CCO / DRC
76119

PREFACE.

THIS book has not been written without many misgivings as to its probable reception. To carry one and the same character through five several works would seem to be a wilful over-drawing on the good-nature of the public, and many persons may very reasonably suppose it an act, of itself, that ought to invite a rebuke. To this natural objection, the author can only say that, if he has committed a grave fault on this occasion, his readers are in some measure answerable for it. The favourable manner in which the more advanced career, and the death, of Leather-Stocking, were received, has created, in the mind of the author, at least, a sort of necessity for giving some account of his younger days. In short, the pictures of his life, such as they are, were already so complete as to excite some little desire to see the 'study,' from which they have all been drawn.

"The Leather-Stocking Tales," now form something like a drama in five acts; complete as to material and design, though probably very incomplete as to execution. Such as they are, the reading world has them before it. The author hopes, should it decide that this particular act, the last in execution, though the first in the order of perusal, is not the best of the series, it will also come to the conclusion that it is not absolutely the worst. More than once, he has been tempted to burn his manuscript, and to turn to some other subject, though he has met with an encouragement, in the course of his labours, of a character so singular, as to be worth mentioning. An anonymous letter from England has reached him, written, as he thinks, by a lady, in which he is urged to do almost the very thing he had already more than half executed; a request that he has been willing enough to construe into a sign that his attempt will be partially forgiven, if not altogether commended.

Little need be said concerning the characters and scenery of this tale. The former are fictitious, as a matter of course; but the latter is as true to nature as an intimate knowledge of the present appearance of the region described, and such probable conjectures concerning its ancient state as could be furnished by the imagination,

enabled the writer to render it. The lake, mountains, valley and forests, are all believed to be sufficiently exact; while the river, rock and shoal are faithful transcripts from nature. Even the points exist, a little altered by civilization, but so nearly answering to the descriptions, as to be easily recognized by all who are familiar with the scenery of the particular region in question.

As to the accuracy of the incidents of this tale, in whole or in part, it is the intention of the author to stand on his rights, and say no more than he deems to be necessary. In the great struggle for veracity that is carrying on between History and Fiction, the latter has so often the best of it, that he is quite willing to refer the reader to his own researches, by way of settling this particular point. Should it appear, on inquiry, that any professed historian, the public document, or even the local traditions, contradict the statements of this book, the writer is ready to admit that the circumstance has entirely escaped his observation, and to confess his ignorance. On the other hand, should it be found that the annals of America do not contain a syllable in opposition to what has been now laid before the world, as he firmly believes investigation will show to be the case, he shall claim for his legend just as much authority as it deserves.

There is a respectable class of novel-readers—respectable for numbers, quite as much as for every thing else—who have often been likened to the man that "sings when he reads, and reads when he sings." These persons are exceedingly imaginative in all matters of fact, and as literal as a school-boy's translation in every thing that relates to poetry. For the benefit of all such persons, it is explicitly stated, that Judith Hutter is Judith Hutter, and not Judith any one else; and, generally, that wherever a coincidence may occur in a christian name, or in the colour of hair, nothing more is meant than can properly be inferred from a coincidence in a christian name, or in the colour of hair. Long experience has taught the writer that this portion of his readers is much the most difficult to please; and he would respectfully suggest, for the benefit of both parties, that they try the experiment of reading works of the imagination as if they were intended for matters of fact. Such a plan might possibly enable them to believe in the possibility of fiction.

THE

DEERSLAYER.

CHAPTER I.

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal,
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal."

CHILDE HAROLD.

On the human imagination, events produce the effects of time. Thus, he who has travelled far and seen much, is apt to fancy that he has lived long; and the history that most abounds in important incidents, soonest assumes the aspect of antiquity. In no other way can we account for the venerable air that is already

gathering around American annals. When the mind reverts to the earliest days of colonial history, the period seems remote and obscure, the thousand changes that thicken along the links of recollections, throwing back the origin of the nation to a day so distant as seemingly to reach the mists of time; and yet four lives of ordinary duration would suffice to transmit, from mouth to mouth, in the form of tradition, all that civilized man has achieved within the limits of the republic. Although New York, alone, possesses a population materially exceeding that of either of the four smallest kingdoms of Europe, or materially exceeding that of the entire Swiss Confederation, it is little more than two centuries since the Dutch commenced their settlement, rescuing the region from the savage state. Thus, what seems venerable by an accumulation of changes, is reduced to familiarity when we come seriously to consider it solely in connection with time.

This glance into the perspective of the past, will prepare the reader to look at the pictures we are about to sketch, with less surprise than he might otherwise feel; and a few additional explanations may carry him back in imagina-

tion, to the precise condition of society that we desire to delineate. It is matter of history that the settlements on the eastern shores of the Hudson, such as Claverack, Kinderhook, and even Poughkeepsie, were not regarded as safe from Indian incursions a century since; and there is still standing on the banks of the same river, and within musket-shot of the wharves of Albany, a residence of a younger branch of the Van Rensselaers, that has loop-holes constructed for defence against the same crafty enemy, although it dates from a period scarcely so distant. Other similar memorials of the infancy of the country are to be found, scattered through what is now deemed the very centre of American civilisation, affording the plainest proofs that all we possess of security from invasion and hostile violence, is the growth of but little more than the time that is frequently filled by a single human life.

The incidents of this tale occurred between the years 1740 and 1745, when the settled portions of the colony of New York were confined to the four Atlantic counties, a narrow belt of country on each side of the Hudson, extending from its mouth to the falls near its head, and

to a few advanced "neighbourhoods" on the Mohawk and the Schoharie. Broad belts of the virgin wilderness, not only reached the shores of the first river, but they even crossed it, stretching away into New England, and affording forest covers to the noiseless moccasin of the native warrior, as he trod the secret and bloody war-path. A bird's-eye view of the whole region east of the Mississippi, must then have offered one vast expanse of woods, relieved by a comparatively narrow fringe of cultivation along the sea, dotted by the glittering surfaces of lakes, and intersected by the waving lines of rivers. In such a vast picture of solemn solitude, the district of country we design to paint sinks into insignificance, though we feel encouraged to proceed by the conviction that, with slight and immaterial distinctions, he who succeeds in giving an accurate idea of any portion of this wild region, must necessarily convey a tolerably correct notion of the whole.

Whatever may be the changes produced by man, the eternal round of the seasons is unbroken. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, return in their stated order, with a sublime precision, affording to man one of the noblest of all the occasions he enjoys of proving

the high powers of his far-reaching mind, in compassing the laws that control their exact uniformity, and in calculating their never-ending revolutions. Centuries of summer suns had warmed the tops of the same noble oaks and pines, sending their heats even to the tenacious roots, when voices were heard calling to each other, in the depths of a forest, of which the leafy surface lay bathed in the brilliant light of a cloudless day in June, while the trunks of the trees rose in gloomy grandeur in the shades beneath. The calls were in different tones, evidently proceeding from two men who had lost their way, and were searching in different directions for their path. At length a shout proclaimed success, and presently a man broke out of the tangled labyrinth of a small swamp, emerging into an opening that appeared to have been formed partly by the ravages of the wind, and partly by those of fire. This little area, which afforded a good view of the sky, although it was pretty well filled with dead trees, lay on the side of one of the high hills, or low mountains, into which nearly the whole surface of the adjacent country was broken.

"Here is room to breathe in!" exclaimed

the liberated forester, as soon as he found himself under a clear sky, shaking his huge frame like a mastiff that has just escaped from a snow-bank; "Hurrah! Deerslayer; here is daylight, at last, and yonder is the lake."

These words were scarcely uttered when the second forester dashed aside the bushes of the swamp, and appeared in the area. After making a hurried adjustment of his arms and disordered dress, he joined his companion, who had already begun his dispositions for a halt.

"Do you know this spot?" demanded the one called Deerslayer, "or do you shout at the sight of the sun?"

"Both, lad, both; I know the spot, and am not sorry to see so useful a friend as the sun. Now we have got the p'ints of the compass in our minds, once more, and 't will be our own faults if we let any thing turn them topsy-turvy ag'in, as has just happened. My name is not Hurry Harry, if this be not the very spot where the land-hunters camped last summer, and passed a week. See, yonder are the dead bushes of their bower, and here is the spring. Much as I like the sun, boy, I've no occasion for it to tell me it is noon; this stomach of

[illegible] good a time-piece as is to be found in [illegible] and it already p'ints to half-past [illegible] open the wallet, and let us 'wind up' for another six hours' run."

[illegible] suggestion, both set themselves about making the preparations necessary for their usual frugal, but hearty, meal. We will profit by this pause in the discourse to give the reader some idea of the appearance of the men, both of whom are destined to enact no insignificant parts in our legend. It would not have been easy to find a more noble specimen of vigorous manhood, than was offered in the person of him who called himself Hurry Harry. His real name was Henry March; but the frontiermen having caught the practice of giving *sobriquets*, from the Indians, the appellation of Hurry was far oftener applied to him than his proper designation, and not unfrequently he was termed Hurry Skurry, a nick-name he had obtained from a dashing, reckless, off-hand manner, and a physical restlessness that kept him so constantly on the move, as to cause him to be known along the whole line of scattered habitations that lay between the province and the Canadas. The stature of Hurry Harry ex-

ceeded six feet four, and being unusually well proportioned, his strength fully realized the idea created by his gigantic frame. The latter did no discredit to the rest of the form, for it was both good-humoured and handsome. His air was free, and though his manner necessarily partook of the rudeness of a border life, the grandeur that pervaded so noble a physique prevented it from becoming altogether vulgar.

Deerslayer, as Hurry called his companion, was a very different person in appearance, as well as in character. In stature, he stood about six feet in his moccasins, but his frame was comparatively light and slender, showing muscles, however, that promised unusual agility, if not unusual strength. His face would have had little to recommend it except youth, were it not for an expression that seldom failed to win upon those who had leisure to examine it, and to yield to the feeling of confidence it created. This expression was simply that of guileless truth, sustained by an earnestness of purpose, and a sincerity of feeling, that rendered it remarkable. At times this air of integrity seemed to be so simple as to awaken the suspicion of a want of the usual means to dis-

between artifice and truth; but few [illegible] serious contact with the man, without [illegible] distrust in respect for his opinions [illegible].

Both these frontier-men were still young, Hurry having reached the age of six or eight and twenty, while Deerslayer was several years his junior. Their attire needs no particular description, though it may be well to add that it was composed in no small degree of dressed deer-skins, and had the usual signs of belonging to those who passed their time between the skirts of civilized society and the boundless forests. There was, notwithstanding, some attention to smartness and the picturesque in the arrangements of Deerslayer's dress, more particularly in the part connected with his arms and accoutrements. His rifle was in perfect condition, the handle of his hunting-knife was neatly carved, his powder-horn was ornamented with suitable devices, lightly cut into the material, and his shot-pouch was decorated with wampum. On the other hand, Hurry Harry, either from constitutional recklessness, or from a secret consciousness how little his appearance required artificial aids, wore every thing in a

careless, slovenly manner, as if he felt a manly scorn for the trifling accessories of dress and ornaments. Perhaps the peculiar excellence of his fine form and great stature were increased, rather than lessened, by this careless and disdainful air of indifference.

"Come, Deerslayer, fall to, and prove that you have a Delaware stomach, as you say you have had a Delaware edication," cried Hurry, setting the example by opening his mouth to receive a slice of cold venison steak that would have made an entire meal for a European peasant; "fall to, lad, and prove your manhood on this poor devil of a doe, with your teeth, as you've already done with your rifle."

"Nay, nay, Hurry, there's little manhood in killing a doe, and that, too, out of season; though there might be some in bringing down a painter, or a catamount," returned the other, disposing himself to comply. "The Delawares have given me my name, not so much on account of a bold heart, as on account of a quick eye, and an active foot. There may not be any cowardyce in overcoming a deer, but sartin it is, there's no great valour."

"The Delawares, themselves, are no heroes,"

[illegible] hurry through his teeth, the mouth [illegible] fall to permit it to be fairly opened, [illegible] would never have allowed them lop-[illegible] bonds, the Mingos, to make them women."

"That matter is not rightly understood—has never been rightly explained," said Deerslayer earnestly, for he was as zealous a friend, as his companion was dangerous as an enemy; the Mengwe fill the woods with their lies, and misconceive words and treaties. I have now lived ten years with the Delawares, and know them to be as manful as any other nation, when the proper time to strike comes."

"Harkee, Master Deerslayer, since we are on the subject, we may as well open our minds to each other in a man-to-man way; answer me one question; you have had so much luck among the game as to have gotten a title, it would seem, but did you ever hit any thing human or intelligible: did you ever pull trigger on an inimy that was capable of pulling one upon you?"

This question produced a singular collision between mortification and correct feeling, in the bosom of the youth, that was easily to be

traced in the workings of his ingenuous countenance. The struggle was short, however, uprightness of heart soon getting the better of false pride, and frontier boastfulness.

"To own the truth, I never did," answered Deerslayer; "seeing that a fitting occasion never offered. The Delawares have been peaceable since my sojourn with 'em, and I hold it to be onlawful to take the life of man, except in open and ginerous warfare."

"What! did you never find a fellow thieving among your traps and skins, and do the law on him with your own hands, by way of saving the magistrates trouble, in the settlements, and the rogue himself the costs of the suit?"

"I am no trapper, Hurry," returned the young man proudly: "I live by the rifle, a we'pon at which I will not turn my back on any man of my years, atween the Hudson and the St. Lawrence. I never offer a skin that has not a hole in its head beside them which natur' made to see with, or to breathe through."

"Ay, ay, this is all very well, in the animal way, though it makes but a poor figure alongsides of scalps and and-bushes. Shooting an

Indian is but an and-bush is acting up to his own principles, and now we have what you call a bloody act on our hands, the sooner you wipe that disgrace off your conscience, the sounder will be your sleep; if it only come from knowing there is one inimy the less prowling in the woods. I shall not frequent your society long, friend Natty, unless you look higher than four-footed beasts to practyse your rifle on."

"Our journey is nearly ended, you say, Master March, and we can part to-night, if you see occasion. I have a fri'nd waiting for me, who will think it no disgrace to consort with a fellow creatur' that has never yet slain his kind."

"I wish I knew what has brought that skulking Delaware into this part of the country so early in the season," muttered Hurry to himself, in a way to show equally distrust and a recklessness of its betrayal. "Where did you say the young chief was to give you the meeting?"

"At a small, round rock, near the foot of the lake, where, they tell me, the tribes are given to resorting to make their treaties, and to bury

their hatchets. This rock have I often heard the Delawares mention, though lake and rock are equally strangers to me. The country is claimed by both Mingos and Mohiçans, and is a sort of common territory to fish and hunt through, in time of peace, though what it may become in war-time, the Lord only knows!"

"Common territory!" exclaimed Hurry, laughing aloud. "I should like to know what Floating Tom Hutter would say to that? He claims the lake as his own property, in vartue of fifteen years' possession, and will not be likely to give it up either to Mingo or Delaware, without a battle for it."

"And what will the colony say to such a quarrel? All this country must have some owner, the gentry pushing their cravings into the wilderness, even where they never dare to ventur', in their own persons, to look at 'em."

"That may do in other quarters of the colony, Deerslayer, but it will not do here. Not a human being, the Lord excepted, owns a foot of s'ile in this part of the country. Pen was never put to paper, consarning either hill or valley, hereaway, as I've heard old Tom say, time and ag'in, and so he claims the best right

to it of any man breathing; and what Tom claims, he'll be very likely to maintain."

"By what I've heard you say, Hurry, this Floating Tom must be an oncommon mortal; neither Mingo, Delaware, nor Pale-Face. His possession, too, has been long; by your tell, and altogether beyond frontier endurance. What's the man's history and natur'?"

"Why, as to old Tom's human natur', it is not much like other men's human natur', but more like a musk-rat's human natur', seeing that he takes more to the ways of that animal, than to the ways of any other fellow-creatur'. Some think he was a free liver on the salt-water, in his youth and, a companion of a sartain Kidd, who was hanged for piracy, long afore you and I were born, or acquainted, and that he came up into these regions, thinking that the king's cruisers could never cross the mountains; and that he might enjoy the plunder peaceably in the woods."

"Then he was wrong, Hurry; very wrong. A man can enjoy plunder *peaceably* nowhere."

"That's much as his turn of mind may happen to be. I've known them that never could enjoy it at all, unless it was in the

midst of a jollification, and them ag'in [illegible] joyed it best in a corner. Some men have no peace if they don't find plunder, and some if they do. Human natur' is crooked as a ram's horn matters. Old Tom seems to belong to neither set, as he enjoys his, if plunder he has really got, with his darters, in a very quiet and comfortable way, and wishes for no more."

"Ay, he has darters, too; I've heard the Delawares, who've hunted this-a-way, tell their histories of these young women. Is there no mother, Hurry?"

"There was *once*, as in reason; but she has now been dead and sunk these two good years."

"Anan?" said Deerslayer, looking up at his companion in a little surprise.

"Dead and sunk, I say, and I hope that's good English. The old fellow lowered his wife into the lake, by way of seeing the last of her, as I can testify, being an eye-witness of the ceremony; but whether Tom did it to save digging, which is no easy job among roots, or out of a consait that water washes away sin sooner than 'arth, is more than I can say."

"Was the poor woman oncommon wicked,

[redacted] should take so much pains

[redacted]nable; though she had her [redacted]r Judith Hutter to have been [redacted] and about as likely to make a good [redacted], as any woman who had lived so long beyond the sound of church bells; and I conclude Old Tom sunk her as much by way of *saving* pains, as by way of *taking* it. There was a little steel in her temper, it' s true, and, as old Hutter is pretty much flint, they struck out sparks once-and-a-while, but, on the whole, they might be said to live amicable like. When they did kindle, the listeners got some such insights into their past lives, as one gets into the darker parts of the woods, when a stray gleam of sunshine finds its way down to the roots of the trees. But Judith I shall always esteem, as it's recommend enough to one woman to be the mother of such a creatur' as her darter, Judith Hutter!"

"Ay, Judith was the name the Delawares mentioned, though it was pronounced after a fashion of their own. From their discourse, I do not think the girl would much please my fancy."

"Thy fancy!" exclaimed March, [illegible] equally at the indifference and [illegible] sumption of his companion, "what [illegible] have you to do with a fancy, and [illegible] consarning one like Judith? You are but a boy—a sapling, that has scarce got root. Judith has had *men* among her suitors, ever since she was fifteen; which is now near five years; and will not be apt even to cast a look upon a half-grown creatur' like you!"

"It is June, and there is not a cloud atween us and the sun, Hurry, so all this heat is not wanted," answered the other, altogether undisturbed; "any one may have a fancy, and a squirrel has a right to make up his mind touching a catamount."

"Ay, but it might not be wise, always, to let the catamount know it," growled March. "But you're young and thoughtless, and I'll overlook your ignorance. Come, Deerslayer," he added, with a good-natured laugh, after pausing a moment to reflect, "come, Deerslayer, we are sworn fri'nds, and will not quarrel about a light-minded jilting jade, just because she happens to be handsome; more especially as you have never seen her. Judith is only for a man

[illegible] teeth show the full marks, and it's [illegible] to be afeard of a boy. What *did* the [illegible] say of the hussy; for, an Indian, [illegible] has his notions of woman-kind, as well as a white man?"

"They said she was fair to look on, and pleasant of speech; but over-given to admirers, and light-minded."

"They are devils incarnate! After all, what schoolmaster is a match for an Indian, in looking into natur'? Some people think they are only good on a trail, or the war-path, but I say that they are philosophers, and understand a man, as well as they understand a beaver, and a woman as well as they understand either. Now that's Judith's character to a riband! To own the truth to you, Deerslayer, I should have married the gal two years since, if it had not been for two particular things, one of which was this very light-mindedness."

"And what may have been the other?" demanded the hunter, who continued to eat like one that took very little interest in the subject.

"T'other was an unsartainty about her having *me*. The hussy is handsome, and she

knows it. Boy, not a tree that is growing in these hills is straighter, or waves in the wind with an easier bend, nor did you ever see the doe that bounded with a more nat'ral motion. If that was all, every tongue would sound her praises; but she has such failings that I find it hard to overlook them, and sometimes I swear I'll never visit the lake ag'in."

"Which is the reason that you always come back? Nothing is ever made more sure by swearing about it."

"Ah, Deerslayer, you are a novelty in these partic'lars; keeping as true to edication as if you had never left the settlements. With me the case is different, and I never want to clinch an idee, that I do not feel a wish to swear about it. If you know'd all that I know consarning Judith, you'd find a justification for a little cursing. Now, the officers sometimes stray over to the lake, from the forts on the Mohawk, to fish and hunt, and then the creatur' seems beside herself! You can see it in the manner in which she wears her finery, and the airs she gives herself with the gallants."

"That is unseemly in a poor man's darter," returned Deerslayer gravely, "the officers are

all gentry, and can only look on such as Judith with evil intentions."

"There's the unsartainty, and the damper! I have my misgivings about a particular captain, and Jude has no one to blame but her own folly, if I'm wrong. On the whole, I wish to look upon her as modest and becoming, and yet the clouds that drive among these hills are not more unsartain. Not a dozen white men have ever laid eyes upon her, since she was a child, and yet her airs, with two or three of these officers, are extinguishers!"

"I would think no more of such a woman, but turn my mind altogether to the forest; *that* will never deceive you, being ordered and ruled by a hand that never wavers."

"If you know'd Judith, you would see how much easier it is to say this, than it would be to do it. Could I bring my mind to be easy about the officers, I would carry the gal off to the Mohawk by force, make her marry me in spite of her whiffling, and leave old Tom to the care of Hetty, his other child, who, if she be not as handsome, or as quick-witted as her sister, is much the most dutiful."

"Is there another bird in the same nest?"

asked Deerslayer, raising his eyes with a species of half-awakened curiosity—"the Delawares spoke to me only of one."

"That's nat'ral enough, when Judith Hutter and Hetty Hutter are in question. Hetty is only comely, while her sister, I tell thee, boy, is such another as is not to be found atween this and the sea: Judith is as full of wit, and talk, and cunning, as an old Indian orator, while poor Hetty is at the best but 'compass-meant us.'"

"Anân?" inquired, again, the Deerslayer.

"Why, what the officers call 'compass meant us,' which I understand to signify that she means always to go in the right direction, but sometimes doesn't know how. 'Compass' for the p'int, and 'meant-us' for the intention. No, poor Hetty is what I call on the varge of ignorance, and sometimes she stumbles on one side of the line, and sometimes on t'other."

"Them are beings that the Lord has in his 'special care," said Deerslayer, solemnly; "for he looks carefully to all who fall short of their proper share of reason. The Redskins honour and respect them who are so gifted, knowing

that the Evil Spirit delights more to dwell in an artful body, than in one that has no cunning to work upon."

"I'll answer for it, then, that he will not remain long with poor Hetty—for the child is just 'compass meant us,' as I have told you. Old Tom has a feeling for the gal, and so has Judith, quick-witted and glorious as she is herself; else would I not answer for her being altogether safe among the sort of men that sometimes meet on the lake shore."

"I thought this water an onknown and little-frequented sheet," observed the Deerslayer, evidently uneasy at the idea of being too near the world.

"It's all that, lad, the eyes of twenty white men never having been laid on it; still, twenty true-bred frontier-men—hunters, and trappers, and scouts, and the like,—can do a deal of mischief if they try. 'Twould be an awful thing to me, Deerslayer, did I find Judith married, after an absence of six months!"

"Have you the gal's faith, to incourage you to hope otherwise!"

"Not at all. I know not how it is—I'm good-looking, boy; that much I can see in any

spring on which the sun shines—and yet I could never get the hussy to a promise, or even a cordial willing smile, though she will laugh by the hour. If she *has* dared to marry in my absence, she'll be like to know the pleasures of widowhood, afore she is twenty!"

"You would not harm the man she had chosen, Hurry, simply because she found him more to her liking than yourself?"

"Why not? If an enemy crosses my path, will I not beat him out of it! Look at me—am I a man like to let any sneaking, crawling, skin-trader, get the better of me in a matter that touches me as near as the kindness of Judith Hutter? Besides, when we live beyond law, we must be our own judges and executioners. And if a man *should* be found dead in the woods, who is there to say who slew him, even admitting that the Colony took the matter in hand, and make a stir about it?"

"If that man should be Judith Hutter's husband, after what has passed, I might tell enough, at least, to put the Colony on the trail."

"You!—half-grown, venison-hunting, bantling! You, dare to think of informing against

Hurry Harry in so much as a matter touching a mink, or a woodchuck!"

"I would dare to speak truth, Hurry, consarning you, or any man that ever lived."

March looked at his companion, for a moment, in silent amazement; then seizing him by the throat, with both hands, he shook his comparatively slight frame, with a violence that menaced the dislocation of some of the bones. Nor was this done jocularly, for anger flashed from the giant's eyes, and there were certain signs, that seemed to threaten much more earnestness than the occasion would appear to call for. Whatever might be the real intention of March, and it is probable there was none settled in his mind, it is certain that he was unusually aroused; and most men who found themselves throttled by one of a mould so gigantic, in such a mood, and in a solitude so deep and helpless, would have felt intimidated, and tempted to yield even the right. Not so, however, with Deerslayer. His countenance remained unmoved; his hand did not shake, and his answer was given in a voice that did not resort to the artifice of louder tones, even, by way of proving its owner's resolution.

"You may shake, Hurry, until you bring down the mountain," he said quietly, "but nothing beside truth will you shake from me. It is probable that Judith Hutter has no husband to slay, and you may never have a chance to waylay one, else would I tell her of your threat in the first conversation I held with the gal."

March released his gripe, and sat regarding the other in silent astonishment.

"I thought we had been friends," he at length added, "but you've got the last secret of mine that will ever enter your ears."

"I want none, if they are to be like this. I know we live in the woods, Hurry, and are thought to be beyond human laws—and perhaps we are so, in fact, whatever it may be in right—but there is a law, and a law maker, that rule across the whole continent. He that flies in the face of either, need not call me fri'nd."

"Damme, Deerslayer, if I do not believe you are, at heart, a Moravian, and no fair-minded, plain-dealing hunter, as you've pretended to be!"

"Fair-minded or not, Hurry, you will find

me as plain-dealing in deeds as I am in words. But this giving way to sudden anger is foolish, and proves how little you have sojourned with the red men. Judith Hutter no doubt is still single, and you spoke but as the tongue ran, and not as the heart felt. There's my hand, and we will say and think no more about it."

Hurry seemed more surprised than ever; then he burst forth in a loud good-natured laugh, which brought tears to his eyes. After this, he accepted the offered hand, and the parties became friends.

"'Twould have been foolish to quarrel about an idee," March cried, as he resumed his meal, "and more like lawyers in the towns, than like sensible men in the woods. They tell me, Deerslayer, much ill blood grows out of idees among the people in the lower counties, and that they sometimes get to extremities upon them."

"That do they—that do they; and about other matters that might better be left to take care of themselves. I have heard the Moravians say that there are lands in which men quarrel even consarning their religion; and if

they can get their tempers up on such a subject, Hurry, the Lord have marcy on 'em. Howsever, there is no occasion for our following their example, and more especially about a husband that this Judith Hutter may never see, or never wish to see. For my part, I feel more cur'osity about the feeble-witted sister, than about your beauty. There's something that comes close to a man's feelin's, when he meets with a fellow creatur' that has all the outward show of an accountable mortal, and who fails of being what he seems, only through a lack of reason. This is bad enough in a man, but when it comes to a woman, and she a young and may-be a winning creatur', it touches all the pitiful thoughts his natur' has. God knows, Hurry, that such poor things are defenceless enough with all their wits about 'em; but its a cruel fortun' when that great protector and guide fails 'em."

"Harkee, Deerslayer—you know what the hunters, and trappers, and peltry-men in general be; and their best friends will not deny that they are headstrong and given to having their own way, without much bethinking 'em of other people's rights, or feelin's—and yet I

don't think the man is to be found, in all this region, who would harm Hetty Hutter, if he could; no, not even a red-skin."

"Therein, fri'nd Hurry, you do the Delawares, at least, and all their allied tribes, only justice, for a red-skin looks upon a being thus struck by God's power, as especially under his care. I rejoice to hear what you say, howsever, I rejoice to hear it, but as the sun is beginning to turn towards the afternoon's sky, had we not better strike the trail ag'in, and make forward, that we may get an opportunity of seeing these wonderful sisters?"

Harry March giving a cheerful assent, the remnants of the meal were soon collected; then the travellers shouldered their packs, resumed their arms, and, quitting the little area of light, they again plunged into the deep shadows of the forest.

CHAPTER II.

"Thou 'rt passing from the lake's green side,
And the hunter's hearth away,
For the time of flowers, for the summer's pride,
Daughter! thou canst not stay."

RECORDS OF WOMAN.

Our two adventurers had not far to go. Hurry knew the direction, as soon as he had found the open spot and the spring, and he now led on with the confident step of a man assured of his object. The forest was dark, as a matter of course, but it was no longer obstructed by under-brush, and the footing was firm and dry. After proceeding near a mile, March stopped, and began to cast about him with an inquiring look, examining the different objects with care, and occasionally turning his eyes on the trunks of the fallen trees, with which the ground was well sprinkled,

as is usually the case in an American wood, especially in those parts of the country where timber has not yet become valuable.

"*This* must be the place, Deerslayer," March at length observed; "here is a beech by the side of a hemlock, with three pines at hand, and yonder is a white birch with a broken top; and yet I see no rock, nor any of the branches bent down, as I told you would be the case."

"Broken branches are onskilful landmarks, as the least-exper'enced know that branches don't often break of themselves," returned the other; "and they also lead to suspicion and discoveries. The Delawares never trust to broken branches, unless it is in friendly times, and on an open trail. As for the beeches, and pines, and hemlocks, why, they are to be seen on all sides of us, not only by two and three's, but by forties, and fifties, and hundreds."

"Very true, Deerslayer, but you never calculate on position. Here is a beech and a hemlock——"

"Yes, and there is another beech and a hemlock, as loving as two brothers; or, for that matter, more loving than some brothers, and yonder are others, for neither tree is a

rarity in these woods. I fear me, Hurry, you are better at trapping beaver and shooting bears, than at a leading on a blindish sort of a trail. Ha! there's what you wish to find, after all!"

"Now, Deerslayer, this is one of your Delaware pretensions, for, hang me if I see any thing but these trees, which do seem to start up around us, in a most onaccountable and perplexing manner."

"Look this-a-way, Hurry—here, in a line with the black oak—don't you see the crooked sapling that is hooked up in the branches of the bass-wood, near it? Now, that sapling was once snow-ridden, and got the bend by its weight; but it never straightened itself, and fastened itself in among the bass-wood branches in the way you see. The hand of man did that act of kindness for it."

"That hand was mine!" exclaimed Hurry; "I found the slender, young thing, bent to the airth, like an unfortunate creatur' borne down by misfortune, and stuck it up where you see it. After all, Deerslayer, I must allow, you're getting to have an oncommon good eye for the woods!"

"'Tis improving, Hurry—'tis improving, I will acknowledge; but 'tis still only a child's eye, compared to some I know. There's Tamenund, now, though a man so old that few remember when he was in his prime, Tamenund lets nothing escape his look, which is more like the scent of a hound, than the sight of an eye. Then Uncas, the father of Chingachgook, and the lawful chief of the Mohicans, is another that it is almost hopeless to pass unseen. I'm improving, I will allow—I'm improving, but far from being perfect as yet."

"And who is this Chingachgook, of whom you talk so much, Deerslayer?" asked Hurry, as he moved off in the direction of the righted sapling, "a loping red-skin, at the best, I make no question."

"Not so, Hurry, but the best of loping red-skins, as you call 'em. If he had his rights, he would be a great chief; but, as it is, he is only a brave and just-minded Delaware; respected, and even obeyed in some things, 'tis true, but of a fallen race, and belonging to a fallen people. Ah! Harry March, 't would warm the heart within you to sit in their lodges of a winter's night, and listen to the traditions

of the ancient greatness and power of the Mohicans !"

"Harkee, fr'ind Nathaniel," said Hurry, stopping short to face his companion, in order that his words might carry greater weight with them, "if a man believed all that other people choose to say in their own favour, he might get an oversized opinion of them, and an undersized opinion of himself. These red-skins are notable boasters, and I set down more than half of their traditions as pure talk."

"There is truth in what you say, Hurry, I'll not deny it, for I've seen it, and believe it. They *do* boast, but then that is a gift from natur'; and it's sinful to withstand nat'ral gifts. See; this is the spot you come to find !"

This remark cut short the discourse, and both the men now gave all their attention to the object immediately before them. Deerslayer pointed out to his companion the trunk of a huge linden, or bass-wood, as it is termed in the language of the country, which had filled its time, and fallen by its own weight. This tree, like so many millions of its brethren, lay where it had fallen, and was mouldering under the slow, but certain influence of the seasons.

The decay, however, had attacked its centre, even while it stood erect, in the pride of vegetation, hollowing out its heart as disease sometimes destroys the vitals of animal life, even while a fair exterior is presented to the observer. As the trunk lay stretched for near a hundred feet along the earth, the quick eye of the hunter detected this peculiarity, and, from this and other circumstances, he knew it to be the tree of which March was in search.

"Ay, here we have what we want," cried Hurry, looking in at the larger end of the linden; "every thing is as snug as if it had been left in an old woman's cupboard. Come, lend me a hand, Deerslayer, and we'll be afloat in half an hour."

At this call, the hunter joined his companion, and the two went to work deliberately and regularly, like men accustomed to the sort of thing in which they were employed. In the first place, Hurry removed some pieces of bark that lay before the large opening in the tree, and which the other declared to be disposed in a way that would have been more likely to attract attention, than to conceal the cover, had any straggler passed that way. The two, then,

drew out a bark canoe, containing its seats, paddles, and other appliances, even to fishing lines and rods. This vessel was by no means small; but such was its comparative lightness, and so gigantic was the strength of Hurry, that the latter shouldered it with seeming ease, declining all assistance, even in the act of raising it to the awkward position in which he was obliged to hold it.

"Lead ahead, Deerslayer," said March, "and open the bushes; the rest I can do for myself."

The other obeyed, and the men left the spot, Deerslayer clearing the way for his companion, and inclining to the right, or to the left, as the latter directed. In about ten minutes, they both broke suddenly into the brilliant light of the sun, on a low gravelly point, that was washed by water on quite half its outline.

An exclamation of surprise broke from the lips of Deerslayer, an exclamation that was low and guardedly made, however, for his habits were much more thoughtful and regulated than those of the reckless Hurry, when, on reaching the margin of the lake, he beheld the view that unexpectedly met his gaze. It was, in truth,

sufficiently striking to merit a brief description. On a level with the point lay a broad sheet of water, so placid and limpid, that it resembled a bed of the pure mountain atmosphere, compressed into a setting of hills and woods. Its length was about three leagues, while its breadth was irregular, expanding to half a league, or even more, opposite to the point, and contracting to less than half that distance, more to the southward. Of course, its margin was irregular, being indented by bays, and broken by many projecting, low points. At its northern, or nearest end, it was bounded by an isolated mountain, lower land falling off, east and west, gracefully relieving the sweep of the outline. Still the character of the country was mountainous; high hills, or low mountains, rising abruptly from the water, on quite nine-tenths of its circuit. The exceptions, indeed, only served a little to vary the scene; and even beyond the parts of the shore that were comparatively low, the back ground was high, though more distant.

But the most striking peculiarities of this scene were its solemn solitude, and sweet repose. On all sides, wherever the eye turned, nothing met it but the mirror-like surface of

the lake, the placid view of heaven, and the dense setting of woods. So rich and fleecy were the outlines of the forest, that scarce an opening could be seen, the whole visible earth, from the rounded mountain-top to the water's edge, presenting one unvaried hue of unbroken verdure. As if vegetation were not satisfied with a triumph so complete, the trees overhung the lake itself, shooting out towards the light; and there were miles along its eastern shore, where a boat might have pulled beneath the branches of dark Rembrandt-looking hemlocks, "quivering aspens," and melancholy pines. In a word, the hand of man had never yet defaced or deformed any part of this native scene, which lay bathed in the sun-light, a glorious picture of affluent forest-grandeur, softened by the balminess of June, and relieved by the beautiful variety afforded by the presence of so broad an expanse of water.

"This is grand!—'tis solemn!—'tis an edication of itself to look upon!" exclaimed Deerslayer, as he stood leaning on his rifle, and gazing to the right and left, north and south, above and beneath, in which ever direction his eye could wander; "not a tree disturbed even

by red-skin hand, as I can discover, but every thing left in the ordering of the Lord, to live and die according to his own designs and laws! Hurry, your Judith ought to be a moral and well-disposed young woman, if she has passed half the time you mention in the centre of a spot so favoured."

"That's a naked truth; and yet the gal has the vagaries. *All* her time has not been passed here, howsever, old Tom having the custom, afore I know'd him, of going to spend the winters in the neighbourhood of the settlers, or under the guns of the forts. No, no, Jude has caught more than is for her good from the settlers, and especially from the gallantifying officers."

"If she has—if she has, Hurry, this is a school to set her mind right ag'in. But what is this I see off here, abreast of us, that seems too small for an island, and too large for a boat, though it stands in the midst of the water."

"Why, that is what these gallanting gentry from the forts call Muskrat Castle; and old Tom, himself, will grin at the name, though it bears so hard on his own natur' and character. 'Tis the stationary house, there being two; this,

which never moves, and the other, that floats, being sometimes in one part of the lake, and sometimes in another. The last goes by the name of the ark, though what may be the meaning of the word is more than I can tell you."

"It must come from the missionaries, Hurry, whom I have heard speak and read of such a thing. They say that the 'arth was once covered with water, and that Noah, with his children, were saved from drowning by building a vessel called an ark, in which he embarked in season. Some of the Delawares believe this tradition, and some deny it; but it behoves you and me, as white men born, to put our faith in its truth. Do you see any thing of this ark?"

"'Tis down south, no doubt, or anchored in some of the bays. But the canoe is ready, and fifteen minutes will carry two such paddles as your'n and mine to the castle."

At this suggestion, Deerslayer helped his companion to place the different articles in the canoe, which was already afloat. This was no sooner done, than the two frontier-men embarked, and, by a vigorous push, sent the light

bark some eight or ten rods from the shore. Hurry now took the seat in the stern, while Deerslayer placed himself forward, and, by leisurely but steady strokes of the paddles, the canoe glided across the placid sheet, towards the extraordinary looking structure, that the former had styled Muskrat Castle. Several times the men ceased paddling, and looked about them at the scene, as new glimpses opened from behind points enabling them to see further down the lake, or to get broader views of the wooded mountains. The only changes, however, were in the new forms of the hills, the varying curvature of the bays, and the wider reaches of the valley south; the whole earth, apparently, being clothed in a gala-dress of leaves.

"This *is* a sight to warm the heart!" exclaimed Deerslayer, when they had thus stopped for the fourth or fifth time; "the lake seems made to let us get an insight into the noble forests; and land and water, alike, stand in the beauty of God's providence! Do you say, Hurry, that there is no man who calls himself lawful owner of all these glories?"

"None but the King, lad. He may pretend to some right of that natur', but he is so far

away, that his claim will never trouble old Tom Hutter, who has got possession, and is like to keep it as long as his life lasts. Tom is no squatter, not being on land; but I call him a floater."

"I inv*y* that man!—I know it's wrong, and I strive ag'in the feelin', but I inv*y* that man! Don't think, Hurry, that I'm consarting any plan to put myself in his moccasins, for such a thought doesn't harbour in my mind; but I can't help a little inv*y*! 'Tis a nat'ral feelin', and the best of us are but nat'ral, after all, and give way to such feelins at times."

"You've only to marry Hetty to inherit half the estate," cried Hurry, laughing; "the gal is comely; nay, if it was n't for her sister's beauty, she would be even handsome; and then her wits are so small, that you may easily convart her into one of your own way of thinking in all things. Do *you* take Hetty off the old fellow's hands, and *I*'ll engage he'll give you an interest in every deer you can knock over within five miles of his lake."

"Does game abound?" suddenly demanded the other, who paid but little attention to March's raillery.

"It has the country to itself. Scarce a trigger is pulled on it; and as for the trappers, this is not a region they greatly frequent. I ought not to be so much here, myself, but Jude pulls one way, while the beaver pulls another. More than a hundred Spanish dollars has that creatur' cost me, the two last seasons; and yet I could not forego the wish to look upon her face once more."

"Do the red-men often visit this lake, Hurry?" continued Deerslayer, pursuing his own train of thought.

"Why, they come and go; sometimes in parties, and sometimes singly. The country seems to belong to no native tribe in particular; and so it has fallen into the hands of the Hutter tribe. The old man tells me that some sharp ones have been wheedling the Mohawks for an Indian deed, in order to get a title out of the Colony; but nothing has come of it, seeing that no one, heavy enough for such a trade, has yet meddled with the matter. The hunters have a good life-lease, still, of this wilderness."

"So much the better—so much the better, Hurry. If I was King of England, the man that felled one of these trees without good

occasion for the timber, should be banished to a desarted and forlorn region, in which no four-footed animal ever trod. Right glad am I that Chingachgook app'inted our meeting on this lake, for, hitherto, eye of mine never looked on such a glorious spectacle!"

"That's because you've kept so much among the Delawares, in whose country there are no lakes. Now, farther north, and farther west, these bits of water abound; and you're young, and may yet live to see 'em. But, though there be other lakes, Deerslayer, there's no other Judith Hutter!"

At this remark his companion smiled, and then he dropped his paddle into the water, as if in consideration of a lover's haste. Both now pulled vigorously until they got within a hundred yards of the "castle," as Hurry familiarly called the house of Hutter, when they again ceased paddling; the admirer of Judith restraining his impatience the more readily, as he perceived that the building was untenanted, at the moment. This new pause was to enable Deerslayer to survey the singular edifice, which was of a construction so novel as to merit a particular description.

Muskrat Castle, as the house had been facetiously named by some waggish officer, stood in the open lake, at a distance of fully a quarter of a mile from the nearest shore. On every other side, the water extended much farther, the precise position being distant about two miles from the northern end of the sheet, and near, if not quite a mile from its eastern shore. As there was not the smallest appearance of any island, but the house stood on piles, with the water flowing beneath it, and Deerslayer had already discovered that the lake was of a great depth, he was fain to ask an explanation of this singular circumstance. Hurry solved the difficulty by telling him that on this spot alone, a long narrow shoal, which extended for a few hundred yards in a north and south direction, rose within six or eight feet of the surface of the lake, and that Hutter had driven piles into it, and placed his habitation on them, for the purpose of security.

"The old fellow was burnt out three times, atween the Indians and the hunters; and in one affray with the red-skins he lost his only son, since which time he has taken to the water for safety. No one can attack him, here,

without coming in a boat, and the plunder and scalps would scarce be worth the trouble of digging out canoes. Then it's by no means sartain which would whip, in such a skrimmage, for old Tom is well supplied with arms and ammunition, and the castle, as you may see, is a tight breast-work ag'in light shot."

Deerslayer had some theoretical knowledge of frontier warfare, though he had never yet been called on to raise his hand, in anger, against a fellow-creature. He saw that Hurry did not overrate the strength of this position, in a military point of view, since it would not be easy to attack it, without exposing the assailants to the fire of the besieged. A good deal of art had also been manifested in the disposition of the timber, of which the building was constructed, and which afforded a protection much greater than was usual to the ordinary log-cabins of the frontier. The sides and ends were composed of the trunks of large pines, cut about nine feet long, and placed upright, instead of being laid horizontally, as was the practice of the country. These logs were squarred on three sides, and had large tenons on each end. Massive sills were se-

cured on the heads of the piles, with suitable grooves dug out of their upper surfaces, which had been squared for the purpose, and the lower tenons of the upright pieces were placed in these grooves, giving them a secure fastening below. Plates had been laid on the upper ends of the upright logs, and were kept in their places by a similar contrivance; the several corners of the structure being well fastened by scarfing and pinning the sills and plates. The floors were made of smaller logs, similarly squared, and the roof was composed of light poles, firmly united, and well covered with bark. The effect of this ingenious arrangement was to give its owner a house that could be approached only by water, the sides of which were composed of logs, closely wedged together, which were two feet thick in their thinnest parts, and which could be separated only by a deliberate and laborious use of human hands, or by the slow operation of time. The outer surface of the building was rude and uneven, the logs being of unequal sizes; but the squared surfaces within, gave both the sides and floor as uniform an appearance as was desired, either for use or show. The

chimney was not the least singular portion of the castle, as Hurry made his companion observe, while he explained the process by which it had been made. The material was a stiff clay, properly worked, which had been put together in a mould of sticks, and suffered to harden, a foot or two at a time, commencing at the bottom. When the entire chimney had thus been raised, and had been properly bound in with outward props, a brisk fire was kindled, and kept going until it was burned to something like a brick-red. This had not been an easy operation, nor had it succeeded entirely; but by dint of filling the cracks with fresh clay, a safe fire-place and chimney had been obtained in the end. This part of the work stood on the log-floor, secured beneath by an extra pile. There were a few other peculiarities about this dwelling, which will better appear in the course of the narrative.

"Old Tom is full of contrivances," added Hurry, "and he set his heart on the success of his chimney, which threatened, more than once, to give out altogether; but parseverance will even overcome smoke; and now he has a comfortable cabin of it, though it did promise, at

one time, to be a chinky sort of a flue to carry flames and fire."

"You seem to know the whole history of the castle, Hurry, chimney and sides," said Deerslayer, smiling; "is love so overcoming that it causes a man to study the story of his sweetheart's habitation?"

"Partly that, lad, and partly eyesight," returned the good-natured giant, laughing; "there was a large gang of us in at the lake, the summer the old fellow built, and we helped him along with the job. I raised no small part of the weight of them uprights with my own shoulders, and the axes flew, I can inform you, Master Natty, while we were bee-ing it among the trees ashore. The old devil is no way stingy about food, and as we had often eat at his hearth, we thought we would just house him comfortably, afore we went to Albany with our skins. Yes, many is the meal I've swallowed in Tom Hutter's cabins; and Hetty, though so weak in the way of wits, has a wonderful particular way about a frying-pan, or a gridiron!"

While the parties were thus discoursing, the canoe had been gradually drawing nearer to the

"castle," and was now so close, as to require but a single stroke of a paddle to reach the landing. This was at a floored platform in front of the entrance, that might have been some twenty feet square.

"Old Tom calls this sort of a wharf, his door-yard," observed Hurry, as he fastened the canoe, after he and his companion had left it; "and the gallants from the forts have named it the 'castle court,' though what a 'court' can have to do here, is more than I can tell you, seeing that there is no law. 'Tis as I supposed; not a soul within, but the whole family is off on a v'y'ge of discovery!"

While Hurry was bustling about the "door-yard," examining the fishing-spears, rods, nets, and other similar appliances of a frontier cabin, Deerslayer, whose manner was altogether more rebuked and quiet, entered the building, with a curiosity that was not usually exhibited by one so long trained in Indian habits. The interior of the "castle" was as faultlessly neat, as its exterior was novel. The entire space, some twenty feet by forty, was subdivided into several small sleeping-rooms; the apartment into which he first entered,

serving equally for the ordinary uses of its inmates and for a kitchen. The furniture was of the strange mixture that it is not uncommon to find in the remotely situated log-tenements of the interior. Most of it was rude, and, to the last degree, rustic; but there was a clock, with a handsome case of dark wood, in a corner, and two or three chairs, with a table and bureau, that had evidently come from some dwelling of more than usual pretension. The clock was industriously ticking, but its leaden-looking hands did no discredit to their dull aspect, for they pointed to the hour of eleven, though the sun plainly showed it was some time past the turn of the day. There was also a dark massive chest. The kitchen utensils were of the simplest kind, and far from numerous, but every article was in its place, and showed the nicest care in its condition.

After Deerslayer had cast a look about him in the outer room, he raised a wooden latch, and entered a narrow passage that divided the inner end of the house into two equal parts. Frontier usages being no way scrupulous, and his curiosity being strongly excited, the young

man now opened a door, and found himself in a bed-room. A single glance sufficed to show that the apartment belonged to females. The bed was of the feathers of wild-geese, and filled nearly to overflowing; but it lay in a rude bunk, raised only a foot from the floor. On one side of it were arranged, on pegs, various dresses of a quality much superior to what one would expect to meet in such a place, with ribands, and other similar articles to correspond. Pretty shoes, with handsome silver buckles, such as were then worn by females in easy circumstances, were not wanting; and no less than six fans of gay colours, were placed half open, in a way to catch the eye by their conceits and hues. Even the pillow, on this side of the bed, was covered with finer linen than its companion, and it was ornamented with a small ruffle. A cap, coquettishly decorated with ribands hung above it, and a pair of long gloves, such as were rarely used in those days by persons of the labouring classes, were pinned ostentatiously to it, as if with an intention to exhibit them there, if they could not be shown on the owner's arms.

All this Deerslayer saw, and noted with a

degrée of minuteness, that would have done credit to the habitual observation of his friends, the Delawares. Nor did he fail to perceive the distinction that existed between the appearances on the different sides of the bed, the head of which stood against the wall. On that opposite to the one just described, every thing was homely and uninviting, except through its perfect neatness. The few garments that were hanging from the pegs were of the coarsest materials, and of the commonest forms, while nothing seemed made for show. Of ribands there was not one; nor was there either cap or kerchief, beyond those which Hutter's daughters might be fairly entitled to wear.

It was now several years since Deerslayer had been in a spot especially devoted to the uses of females of his own colour and race. The sight brought back to his mind a rush of childish recollections; and he lingered in the room with a tenderness of feeling to which he had long been a stranger. He bethought him of his mother, whose homely vestments he remembered to have seen hanging on pegs, like those which he felt must belong to Hetty Hutter;

and he bethought himself of a sister, whose incipient and native taste for finery had exhibited itself somewhat in the manner of that of Judith, though necessarily in a less degree. These little resemblances opened a long-hidden vein of sensations; and as he quitted the room, it was with a saddened mien. He looked no further, but returned slowly and thoughtfully towards the "door-yard."

"Old Tom has taken to a new calling, and has been trying his hand at the traps," cried Hurry, who had been coolly examining the borderer's implements; "if that is his humour, and you 're disposed to remain in these parts, we can make an oncommon comfortable season of it; for, while the old man and I out-knowledge the beaver, you can fish and knock down the deer to keep body and soul together. We always give the poorest hunters half a share, but one as act*y*ve and sartain as yourself, might expect a full one."

"Thank'ee, Hurry; thank'ee, with all my heart—but I do a little beavering for myself, as occasions offer. 'Tis true, the Delawares call me Deerslayer, but it's not so much because I'm pretty fatal with the venison, as

because that while I kill so many bucks and does, I've never yet taken the life of a fellow-creatur'! They say their traditions do not tell of another who had shed so much blood of animals, that had not shed the blood of man."

"I hope they don't account you chicken-hearted, lad? A faint-hearted man is like a no-tailed beaver."

"I don't believe, Hurry, that they account me as out-of-the-way timorsome, even though they may not account me as out-of-the-way brave. But I'm not quarrelsome; and that goes a great way towards keeping blood off the hands, among the hunters and red-skins; and then, Harry March, it keeps blood off the conscience too."

"Well, for my part, I account game, a red-skin, and a Frenchman as pretty much the same thing; though I'm as onquarrelsome a man, too, as there is in all the Colonies. I despise a quarreller, as I do a cur-dog; but one as no need to be over-scrupulsome, when it's the right time to show the flint."

"I look upon him as the most of a man, who acts nearest the right, Hurry. But this is a glorious spot, and my eyes never a-weary looking at it!"

"'Tis your first acquaintance with a lake; and these idees come over us all at such times. Lakes have a general character, as I say, being pretty much water and land, and points and bays."

As this definition by no means met the feelings that were uppermost in the mind of the young hunter, he made no immediate answer, but stood gazing at the dark hills, and the glassy water in silent enjoyment.

"Have the Governor's, or the King's people given this lake a name?" he suddenly asked, as if struck with a new idea. "If they 've not begun to blaze their trees, and set up their compasses, and line off their maps, it's likely they 've not bethought them to disturb natur' with a name."

"They 've not got to that, yet; and the last time I went in with skins, one of the King's surveyors was questioning me consarning all the region hereabouts. He had heard that there was a lake in this quarter, and had got some general notions about it, such as that there was water and hills; but how much of either, he know'd no more than you know of the Mohawk tongue. I didn't open the trap any wider than was necessary, giving him but poor

encouragement in the way of farms and clearings. In short, I left on his mind some such opinion of this country as a man gets of a spring of dirty water, with a path to it that is so muddy that one mires afore he sets out. He told me they hadn't got the spot down, yet, on their maps; though I conclude that is a mistake, for he showed me his parchment, and there is a lake down on it where there is no lake, in fact, and which is about fifty miles from the place where it ought to be, if they meant it for this. I don't think my account will encourage him to mark down another by way of improvement."

Here Hurry laughed heartily, such tricks being particularly grateful to a set of men who dreaded the approaches of civilization as a curtailment of their own lawless empire. The egregious errors that existed in the maps of the day, all of which were made in Europe, was, moreover, a standing topic of ridicule among them; for, if they had not science enough to make any better themselves, they had sufficient local information to detect the gross blunders contained in those that existed. Any one, who will take the trouble to compare

these unanswerable evidences of the topographical skill of our fathers a century since, with the more accurate sketches of our own time, will at once perceive that the men of the woods had sufficient justification for all their criticism on this branch of the skill of the colonial governments, which did not at all hesitate to place a river, or a lake, a degree or two out of the way, even though they lay within a day's march of the inhabited parts of the country.

"I'm glad it has no name," resumed Deerslayer, "or, at least, no pale-faced name; for their christenings always foretell waste and destruction. No doubt, howsever, the red-skins have their modes of knowing it, and the hunters and trappers, too; they are likely to call the place by something reasonable and resembling."

"As for the tribes, each has its own tongue, and its own way of calling things; and they treat this part of the world just as they treat all others. Among ourselves, we've got to calling the place the 'Glimmerglass,' seeing that its whole basin is so often fringed with pines, cast upward from its face; as if it would throw back the hills that hang over it."

"There is an outlet, I know, for all lakes

have outlets, and the rock at which I am to meet Chingachgook stands near an outlet. Has *that* no Colony-name yet?"

"In that particular they've got the advantage of us, having one end, and that the biggest; in their own keeping; they've given it a name which has found its way up to its source; names nat'rally working up steam. No doubt, Deerslayer, you've seen the Susquehannah down in the Delaware country?"

"That have I, and hunted along its banks a hundred times."

"That and this are the same, in fact, and, I suppose, the same in sound. I am glad they've been compelled to keep the red-men's name, for it would be too hard to rob them of both land and name!"

Deerslayer made no answer; but he stood leaning on his rifle, gazing at the view which so much delighted him. The reader is not to suppose, however, that it was the picturesque alone which so strongly attracted his attention. The spot was very lovely, of a truth, and it was then seen in one of its most favourable moments, the surface of the lake being as smooth as glass, and as limpid as pure air, throwing

back the mountains, clothed in dark pines, along the whole of its eastern boundary, the points thrusting forward their trees even to nearly horizontal lines, while the bays were seen glittering through an occasional arch beneath, left by a vault fretted with branches and leaves. It was the air of deep repose—the solitudes, that spoke of scenes and forests untouched by the hands of man—the reign of nature, in a word, that gave so much pure delight to one of his habits and turn of mind. Still, he felt, though it was unconsciously, like a poet also. If he found a pleasure in studying this large, and, to him, unusual opening into the mysteries and forms of the woods, as one is gratified in getting broader views of any subject that has long occupied his thoughts, he was not insensible to the innate loveliness of such a landscape neither, but felt a portion of that soothing of the spirit which is a common attendant of a scene so thoroughly pervaded by the holy calm of nature.

CHAPTER III.

"Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools,—
Being native burghers of this desert city,—
Should, in their own confines, with forked heads
Have their round haunches gored."

SHAKSPEARE.

Hurry Harry thought more of the beauties of Judith Hutter, than of those of the Glimmerglass, and its accompanying scenery. As soon as he had taken a sufficiently intimate survey of Floating Tom's implements, therefore, he summoned his companion to the canoe, that they might go down the lake in quest of the family. Previously to embarking, however, Hurry carefully examined the whole of the northern end of the water with an indifferent ship's glass, that formed a part of Hutter's

effects. In this scrutiny, no part of the shore was overlooked; the bays and points, in particular, being subjected to a closer inquiry than the rest of the wooded boundary.

"'Tis as I thought," said Hurry, laying aside the glass, "the old fellow is drifting about the south end this fine weather, and has left the castle to defend itself. Well, now we know that he is not up this-a-way, 't will be but a small matter to paddle down; and hunt him up in his hiding-place."

"Does Master Hutter think it necessary to burrow on this lake?" inquired Deerslayer, as he followed his companion into the canoe; "to my eye, it is such a solitude as one might open his whole soul in, and fear no one to disarrange his thoughts, or his worship."

"You forget your friends, the Mingos, and all the French savages. Is there a spot on 'arth, Deerslayer, to which them disquiet rogues don't go? Where is the lake, or even the deer-lick, that the blackguards don't find out; and, having found out, don't, sooner or later, discolour its water with blood?"

"I hear no good character of them, sartainly, friend Hurry, though I 've never been called

on, as yet, to meet them, or any other mortal on the war-path. I dare to say that such a lovely spot as this would not be likely to be overlooked by such plunderers; for, though I 've not been in the way of quarrelling with them tribes myself, the Delawares give me such an account of 'em, that I 've pretty much set 'em down, in my own mind, as thorough miscreants."

"You may do that with a safe conscience, or; for that matter, any other savage you may happen to meet."

Here Deerslayer protested, and, as they went paddling down the lake, a hot discussion was maintained concerning the respective merits of the pale-faces and the red-skins. Hurry had all the prejudices and antipathies of a white hunter, who generally regards the Indian as a sort of natural competitor, and, not unfrequently, as a natural enemy. As a matter of course, he was loud, clamorous, dogmatical, and not very argumentative. Deerslayer, on the other hand, manifested a very different temper; proving, by the moderation of his language, the fairness of his views, and the simplicity of his distinctions, that he pos-

sessed every disposition to hear reason, a strong innate desire to do justice, and an ingenuousness that was singularly indisposed to have recourse to sophisms to maintain an argument, or to defend a prejudice. Still, he was not altogether free from the influence of the latter feeling. This tyrant of the human mind, which rushes on its prey through a thousand avenues, almost as soon as men begin to think and feel, and which seldom relinquishes his iron sway until they cease to do either, had made some impression on even the just propensities of this individual, who probably offered, in these particulars, a fair specimen of what absence from bad example, the want of temptation to go wrong, and native good feeling can render youth.

"You will allow, Deerslayer, that a Mingo is more than half devil," cried Hurry, following up the discussion with an animation that touched closely on ferocity, "though you want to over-persuade me that the Delaware tribe is pretty much made up of angels. Now, I gainsay that proposal, consarning white men, even. All white men are not faultless, and therefore all Indians *can't* be faultless. And so your

argument is out at the elbow in the start. But this is what I call reason. Here's three colours on 'arth; white, black and red. White is the highest colour, and therefore the best man; black comes next, and is put to live in the neighbourhood of the white man, as tolerable and fit to be made use of; and red comes last, which shows that those that made 'em never expected an Indian to be accounted as more than half human."

"God made all three alike, Hurry."

"Alike! Do you call a nigger like a white man, or me like an Indian?"

"You go off at half-cock, and don't hear me out. God made us all, white, black and red; and, no doubt, had his own wise intentions in colouring us differently. Still, he made us, in the main, much the same in feelin's; though, I'll not deny that he gave each race its gifts. A white man's gifts are christianized, while a red-skin's are more for the wilderness. Thus, it would be a great offence for a white man to scalp the dead; whereas, it's a signal vartue in an Indian. Then ag'in, a white man cannot amboosh women and children in war, while a red-skin may. 'Tis *cruel* work, I'll allow; but

for them it's *lawful* work; while for *us*, it would be grievous work."

"That depends on your inimy. As for scalping, or even skinning a savage, I look upon them pretty much the same as cutting off the ears of wolves for the bounty, or stripping a bear of its hide. And then you're out significantly, as to taking the poll of a red-skin in hand, seeing that the very Colony has offered a bounty for the job; all the same as it pays for wolves' ears and crows' heads."

"Ay and a bad business it is, Hurry. Even the Indians, themselves, cry shame on it, seeing it's ag'in a white man's gifts. I do not pretend that all that white men do, is properly christianized, and according to the lights given them; for then they would be what they *ought* to be; which we know they are not; but I will maintain that tradition, and use, and colour, and laws, make such a difference in races as to amount to gifts. I do not deny that there are tribes among the Indians that are nat'rally perverse and wicked, as there are nations among the whites. Now, I account the Mingos as belonging to the first, and the Frenchers, in the Canadas, to the last. In a state of lawful war-

fare, such as we have lately got into, it is a duty to keep down all compassionate feelin's, so far as life goes, agi'n either; but when it comes to scalps, it's a very different matter."

"Just hearken to reason, if you please, Deerslayer, and tell me if the Colony can make an onlawful law? Is n't an onlawful law more ag'in natur' than scalpin' a savage? A law can no more be onlawful, than truth can be a lie."

"That *sounds* reasonable; but it has a most onreasonable bearing, Hurry. Laws don't all come from the same quarter. God has given us his'n, and some come from the Colony, and others come from the king and parliament. When the Colony's laws, or even the King's laws, run ag'in the laws of God, they get to be onlawful and ought not to be obeyed. I hold to a white man's respecting white laws, so long as they do not cross the track of a law comin' from a higher authority; and for a red-man to obey his own red-skin usages, under the same privilege. But, 'tis useless talking, as each man will think for himself, and have his say agreeable to his thoughts. Let us keep a good look-out for your friend, Floating Tom, lest we pass

him, as he lies hidden under this bushy shore."

Deerslayer had not named the borders of the lake amiss. Along their whole length, the smaller trees overhung the water with their branches often dipping in the transparent element. The banks were steep, even from the narrow strand; and, as vegetation invariably struggles towards the light, the effect was precisely that at which the lover of the picturesque would have aimed, had the ordering of this glorious setting of forest been submitted to his control. The points and bays, too, were sufficiently numerous to render the outline broken and diversified. As the canoe kept close along the western side of the lake, with a view, as Hurry had explained to his companion, of reconnoitering for enemies before he trusted himself too openly in sight, the expectations of the two adventurers were kept constantly on the stretch, as neither could foretell what the next turning of a point might reveal. Their progress was swift, the gigantic strength of Hurry enabling him to play with the light bark as if it had been a feather, while the skill of his companion almost equalized their useful-

ness, notwithstanding the disparity in natural means.

Each time the canoe passed a point, Hurry turned a look behind him, expecting to see the "ark" anchored, or beached in the bay. He was fated to be disappointed, however, and they had got within a mile of the southern end of the lake, or a distance of quite two leagues from the "castle," which was now hidden from view by half a dozen intervening projections of the land, when he suddenly ceased paddling, as if uncertain in what direction next to steer.

"It is possible that the old chap has dropped into the river," said Hurry, after looking carefully along the whole of the eastern shore, which was about a mile distant, and open to his scrutiny for more than half its length; "for he has taken to trapping considerable of late, and, barring flood-wood, he might drop down it a mile or so; though he would have a most scratching time in getting back again!"

"Where is this outlet?" asked Deerslayer; "I see no opening in the banks, or the trees, that looks as if it would let a river like the Susquehannah run through it."

"Ay, Deerslayer, rivers are like human mor-

tals; having small beginnings, and ending with broad shoulders and wide mouths. You don't see the outlet, because it passes atween high, steep banks; and the pines, and hemlocks, and bass-woods hang over it, as a roof hangs over a house. If old Tom is not in the 'Rat's Cove,' he must have burrowed in the river; we'll look for him first in the Cove, and then we'll cross to the outlet."

As they proceeded, Hurry explained that there was a shallow bay, formed by a long, low point, that had gotten the name of the "Rat's Cove," from the circumstance of its being a favourite haunt of the muskrat; and which offered so complete a cover for the "ark," that its owner was fond of lying in it, whenever he found it convenient.

"As a man never knows who may be his visiters in this part of the country," continued Hurry, "it's a great advantage to get a good look at 'em before they come too near. Now it's war, such caution is more than commonly useful, since a Canadian, or a Mingo, might get into his hut afore he invited 'em. But Hutter is a first-rate look-outer, and can pretty much scent danger, as a hound scents the deer."

"I should think the castle so open, that it would be sartain to draw inimies, if any happened to find the lake; a thing onlikely enough, I will allow, as it's off the trail of the forts and settlements."

"Why, Deerslayer, I've got to believe that a man meets with inimies easier than he meets with fri'nds. It's skearful to think for how many causes one gets to be your inimy, and for how few your fri'nd. Some take up the hatchet because you don't think just as they think; other some because you run ahead of 'em in the same idees; and I once know'd a vagabond that quarrelled with a fri'nd because he didn't think him handsome. Now, you're no monument, in the way of beauty, yourself, Deerslayer, and yet you wouldn't be so onreasonable as to become my inimy for just saying so."

"I'm as the Lord made me; and I wish to be accounted no better, nor any worse. Good looks I may not have; that is to say, to a degree that the light-minded and vain crave; but I hope I'm not altogether without some ricommend in the way of good conduct. There's few nobler looking men to be seen than yourself,

Hurry; and I know that I am not to expect any to turn their eyes on me, when such a one as you can be gazed on; but I do not know that a hunter is less expart with the rifle, or less to be relied on for food, because he doesn't wish to stop at every shining spring he may meet, to study his own countenance in the water."

Here Hurry burst into a fit of loud laughter; for, while he was too reckless to care much about his own manifest physical superiority, he was well aware of it, and, like most men who derive an advantage from the accidents of birth, or nature, he was apt to think complacently on the subject, whenever it happened to cross his mind.

"No, no, Deerslayer, you're no beauty as you will own yourself, if you'll look over the side of the canoe," he cried; "Jude will say *that* to your face, if you start her, for a parter tongue isn't to be found in any gal's head, in or out of the settlements, if you provoke her to use it. My advice to you is never to aggravate Judith; though you may tell any thing to Hetty, and she'll take it as meek as a lamb. No, Jude will be just as like as not to tell you her opinion consarning your looks."

"And if she does, Hurry, she will tell me no more than you have said already—"

"You're not thick'ning up about a small remark, I hope, Deerslayer, when no harm is meant. You are *not* a beauty, as you must know, and why shouldn't fri'nds tell each other these little trifles? If you *was* handsome, or ever like to be, I'd be one of the first to tell you of it; and that ought to content you. Now, if Jude was to tell me that I'm as ugly as a sinner, I'd take it as a sort of obligation, and try not to believe her."

"It's easy for them that natur' has favoured, to jest about such matters, Hurry, though it is sometimes hard for others. I'll not deny but I've had my cravings towards good looks; yes, I have; but then I've always been able to get them down by considering how many I've known with fair outsides, who have had nothing to boast of inwardly. I'll not deny, Hurry, that I often wish I'd been created more comely to the eye, and more like such a one as yourself, in them particulars; but then I get the feelin' under by remembering how much better off I am, in a great many respects, than some fellow-mortals. I might have been born lame, and

onfit, even for a squirrel hunt; or, blind, which would have made me a burthen on myself, as well as on my fri'nds; or, without hearing, which would have totally onqualified me for ever campaigning, or scouting, which I look forward to, as part of a man's duty in troublesome times. Yes, yes; it's not pleasant, I will allow, to see them that's more comely, and more sought after, and honoured than yourself; but it may all be borne, if a man looks the evil in the face, and don't mistake his gifts and his obligations."

Hurry, in the main, was a good-hearted as well as good-natured fellow; and the self-abasement of his companion completely got the better of the passing feeling of personal vanity. He regretted the allusion he had made to the other's appearance, and endeavoured to express as much, though it was done in the uncouth manner that belonged to the habits and opinions of the frontier.

"I meant no harm, Deerslayer," he answered, in a deprecating manner, "and hope you'll forget what I've said. If you're not downright handsome, you've a sartin look that says plainer that any words, that all's right

within. Then you set no valie by looks, and will the sooner forgive any little slight to your appearance. I will not say that Jude will greatly admire you, for that might raise hopes that would only breed disapp'intment; but there's Hetty, now, would be just as likely to find satisfaction in looking at *you*, as in looking at any other man. Then you're altogether too grave and considerate-like, to care much about Judith; for, though the gal *is* oncommon, she is so general in her admiration, that a man need not be exalted, because she happens to smile. I sometimes think the hussy loves herself better than she does any thing else breathin' !"

"If she did, Hurry, she'd do no more, I'm afeard, than most queens on their thrones, and ladies in the towns," answered Deerslayer, smiling, and turning back towards his companion with every trace of feeling banished from his honest-looking and frank countenance. "I never yet know'd even a Delaware of whom you might not say that much. But here is the end of the long p'int, you mentioned, and the 'Rat's Cove' can't be far off."

This point, instead of thrusting itself forward like all the others, ran in a line with the main

shore of the lake, which here swept within it in a deep and retired bay, circling round south again, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, and crossed the valley, forming the southern termination of the water. In this bay, Hurry felt almost certain of finding the ark, since, anchored behind the trees that covered the narrow strip of the point, it might have lain concealed from prying eyes an entire summer. So complete, indeed, was the cover, in this spot, that a boat hauled close to the beach, within the point, and near the bottom of the bay, could by possibility be seen from only one direction; and that was from a densely-wooded shore, within the sweep of the water, where strangers would be little apt to go.

"We shall soon see the ark," said Hurry, as the canoe glided round the extremity of the point, where the water was so deep as actually to appear black; "he loves to burrow up among the rushes, and we shall be in his nest in five minutes, although the old fellow may be off among the traps, himself."

March proved a false prophet. The canoe completely doubled the point, so as to enable the two travellers to command a view of the

whole cove, or bay, for it was more properly the last, and no object, but those that nature had placed there, became visible. The placid water swept round in a graceful curve, the rushes bent gently towards its surface, and the trees overhung it as usual; but all lay in the soothing and sublime solitude of a wilderness. The scene was such as a poet, or an artist would have delighted in, but it had no charm for Hurry Harry, who was burning with impatience to get a sight of his light-minded beauty.

The motion of the canoe had been attended with little or no noise, the frontier-men, habitually, getting accustomed to caution in most of their movements, and it now lay on the glassy water appearing to float in air, partaking of the breathing stillness that seemed to pervade the entire scene. At this instant a dry stick was heard cracking on the narrow strip of land, that concealed the bay from the open lake. Both the adventurers started, and each extended a hand towards his rifle, the weapon never being out of reach of the arm.

"'Twas too heavy for any light creatur';" whispered Hurry, "and it sounded like the tread of a man!"

"Not so—not so," returned Deerslayer; "'twas, as you say, too heavy for one, but it was too light for the other. Put your paddle in the water, and send the canoe in to that log; I 'll land, and cut off the creatur's rêtreat up the p'int, be it a Mingo, or be it only a musk rat."

As Hurry complied, Deerslayer was soon on the shore, advancing into the thicket with a moccasin'd foot, and a caution that prevented the least noise. In a minute, he was in the centre of the narrow strip of land, and moving slowly down towards its end, the bushes rendering extreme watchfulness necessary. Just as he reached the centre of the thicket, the dried twigs cracked again, and the noise was repeated, at short intervals, as if some creature having life walked slowly towards the point. Hurry heard these sounds also, and, pushing the canoe off into the bay, he seized his rifle to watch the result. A breathless minute succeeded, after which a noble buck walked out of the thicket, proceeded with a stately step to the sandy extremity of the point, and began to slake his thirst from the water of the lake. Hurry hesitated an instant; then raising his

rifle hastily to his shoulder, he took sight and fired. The effect of this sudden interruption of the solemn stillness of such a scene, was not its least striking peculiarity. The report of the weapon had the usual sharp, short sound of the rifle; but, when a few moments of silence had succeeded the sudden crack, during which the noise was floating in air across the water, it reached the rocks of the opposite mountain, where the vibrations accumulated, and were rolled from cavity to cavity for miles along the hills, seeming to awaken the sleeping thunders of the woods. The buck merely shook his head at the report of the rifle, and the whistling of the bullet, for never before had he come in contact with man; but the echoes of the hills awakened his distrust, and, leaping forward, with his four legs drawn under his body, he fell at once into deep water, and began to swim towards the foot of the lake. Hurry shouted, and dashed forward in chase, and for one or two minutes the water foamed around the pursuer and the pursued. The former was dashing past the point, when Deerslayer appeared on the sand, and signed to him to return.

"'Twas inconsiderate to pull a trigger afore we had reconn'itred the shore, and made sartain

that no inimies harboured near it," said the latter, as his companion slowly and reluctantly complied. "This much I have l'arned from the Delawares, in the way of schooling and traditions, even though I've never yet been on a war-path. And, moreover, venison can hardly be called in season, now, and we do not want for food. They call me Deerslayer, I'll own; and perhaps I desarve the name, in the way of understanding the creatur's habits, as well as for sartainty in the aim; but they can't accuse me of killing an animal when there is no occasion for the meat, or the skin. I may be a slayer, it's true, but I'm no slaughterer."

"'Twas an awful mistake to miss that buck!" exclaimed Hurry, doffin his cap and running his fingers through his handsome, but matted curls, as if he would loosen his tangled ideas by the process; "I 've not done so onhandy a thing since I was fifteen."

"Never lament it; the creatur's death could have done neither of us any good, and might have done us harm. Them echoes are more awful, in my ears, than your mistake, Hurry; for they sound like the voice of natur' calling out ag'in a wasteful and onthinking action."

"You 'll hear plenty of such calls, if you

tarry long in this quarter of the world, lad," returned the other laughing. "The echoes repeat pretty much all that is said or done on the Glimmerglass, in this calm summer weather. If a paddle falls, you hear of it, sometimes, ag'in and ag'in; as if the hills were mocking your clumsiness; and a laugh, or a whistle, comes out of them pines, when they 're in the humour to speak, in a way to make you believe they can r'ally converse."

"So much the more reason for being prudent and silent. I do not think the inimy can have found their way into these hills yet, for I don't know what they are to gain by it; but all the Delawares tell me, that as courage is a warrior's first vartue, so is prudence his second. One such call from the mountains, is enough to let a whole tribe into the secret of our arrival."

"If it does no other good, it will warn old Tom to put the pot over, and let him know visitors are at hand. Come, lad; get into the canoe, and we will hunt the ark up while there is yet day."

Deerslayer complied, and the canoe left the spot. Its head was turned diagonally across

the lake, pointing towards the south-eastern curvature of the sheet. In that direction, the distance to the shore, or to the termination of the lake, on the course the two were now steering, was not quite a mile, and their progress being always swift, it was fast lessening under the skilful, but easy sweeps of the paddles. When about half-way across, a slight noise drew the eyes of the men towards the nearest land, and they saw that the buck was just emerging from the lake, and wading towards the beach. In a minute the noble animal shook the water from his flanks, gazed upward at the covering of trees, and, bounding against the bank, plunged into the forest.

"That creatur' goes off with gratitude in his heart," said Deerslayer, "for natur' tells him he has escaped a great danger. You ought to have some of the same feelin's, Hurry, to think your eye wasn't truer—that your hand was onsteady, when no good could come of a shot that was intended onmeaningly, rather than in reason."

"I deny the eye and the hand," cried March, with some heat. "You 've got a little character down among the Delawares, there, for

quickness and sartainty at a deer; but I should like to see you behind one of them pines, and a full-painted Mingo behind another, each with a cock'd rifle, and a-striving for the chance! Them's the situations, Nathaniel, to try the sight and the hand, for they begin with trying the narves. I never look upon killing a creatur' as an explite; but killing a savage is. The time will come to try your hand, now we 've got to blows ag'in, and we shall soon know what a ven'son repitation can do in the field. I deny that either hand or eye was onsteady; it was all a miscalculation of the buck, which stood still when he ought to have kept in motion, and so I shot ahead of him."

"Have it your own way, Hurry; all I contend for is, that it's lucky. I dare say I shall not pull upon a human mortal as steadily, or with as light a heart, as I pull upon a deer."

"Who's talking of mortals, or of human beings at all, Deerslayer? I put the matter to you on the supposition of an Indian. I dare say any man would have his feelin's when it got to be life, or death, ag'in another human mortal; but there would be no such scruples in regard to an Indian; nothing but the chance

of his hitting you, or the chance of your hitting him."

"I look upon the red men to be quite as human as we are ourselves, Hurry. They have their gifts, and their religion, it's true; but that makes no difference in the end, when each will be judged according to his deeds, and not according to his skin."

"That's downright missionary, and will find little favour up in this part of the country, where the Moravians don't congregate. Now, skin makes the man. This is reason; else how are people to judge of each other. The skin is put on, over all, in order that when a creatur', or a mortal, is fairly seen, you may know at once what to make of him. You know a bear from a hog by his skin, and a grey squirrel from a black."

"True, Hurry," said the other, looking back and smiling, "nevertheless, they are both squirrels."

"Who denies it? But you'll not say that a red man and a white man are both Indians?"

"No; but I *do* say they are both men. Men of different races and colours, and having different gifts and traditions, but, in the main,

with the same natur'. 'Both have souls; and both will be held accountable for their deeds in this life."

Hurry was one of those theorists who believed in the inferiority of all of the human race who were not white. His notions on the subject were not very clear, nor were his definitions at all well settled; but his opinions were none the less dogmatical, or fierce. His conscience accused him of sundry lawless acts against the Indians, and he had found it an exceedingly easy mode of quieting it, by putting the whole family of red men, incontinently, without the category of human rights. Nothing angered him sooner, than to deny his proposition, more especially if the denial were accompanied by a show of plausible argument; and he did not listen to his companion's remarks with much composure, of either manner or feeling.

"You're a boy, Deerslayer, misled and misconsaited by Delaware arts, and missionary ignorance," he exclaimed, with his usual indifference to the forms of speech, when excited. "*You* may account yourself as a red skin's brother, but *I* hold 'em all to be animals; with

nothing human about 'em, but cunning. *That* they have, I 'll allow; but so has a fox, or even a bear. I'm older than you, and have lived longer in the woods—or, for that matter, have lived always there, and am not to be told what an Indian is, or what he is not. If you wish to be considered a savage, you 've only to say so; and I 'll name you as such to Judith, and the old man, and then we 'll see how you 'll like your welcome."

Here Hurry's imagination did his temper some service, since by conjuring up the reception his semi-aquatic acquaintance would be likely to bestow on one thus introduced, he burst into a hearty fit of laughter. Deerslayer too well knew the uselessness of attempting to convince such a being of any thing against his prejudices to feel a desire to attempt the task; and he was not sorry that the approach of the canoe to the south-eastern curve of the lake, gave a new direction to his ideas. They were now, indeed, quite near the place that March had pointed out for the position of the outlet, and both began to look for it with a curiosity that was increased by the expectation of finding the ark.

It may strike the reader as a little singular, that the place where a stream of any size passed through banks that had an elevation of some twenty feet, should be a matter of doubt with men who could not now have been more than two hundred yards distant from the precise spot. It will be recollected, however, that the trees and bushes here, as elsewhere, fairly overhung the water, making such a fringe to the lake, as to conceal any little variations from its general outline.

"I've not been down at this end of the lake these two summers," said Hurry, standing up in the canoe, the better to look about him. "Ay, there's the rock, showing its chin above the water, and I know that the river begins in its neighbourhood."

The men now plied the paddles again, and they were presently within a few yards of the rock, floating towards it, though their efforts were suspended. This rock was not large, being merely some five or six feet high, only half of which elevation rose above the lake. The incessant washing of the water, for centuries, had so rounded its summit, that it resembled a large bee-hive in shape, its form

being more than usually regular and even. Hurry remarked, as they floated slowly past, that this rock was well known to all the Indians in that part of the country, and that they were in the practice of using it as a mark, to designate the place of meeting, when separated by their hunts and marches.

"And here is the river, Deerslayer," he continued, "though so shut in by trees and bushes, as to look more like an and-bush, than the outlet of such a sheet as the Glimmerglass."

Hurry had not badly described the place, which did truly seem to be a stream lying in ambush. The high banks might have been a hundred feet asunder; but, on the western side, a small bit of low land extended so far forward, as to diminish the breadth of the stream to half that width. As the bushes hung in the water beneath, and pines that had the stature of church-steeples, rose in tall columns above, all inclining towards the light, until their branches intermingled, the eye, at a little distance, could not easily detect any opening in the shore, to mark the egress of the water. In the forest above, no traces of this outlet

were to be seen from the lake, the whole presenting the same connected, and seemingly interminable, carpet of leaves. As the canoe slowly advanced, sucked in by the current, it entered beneath an arch of trees, through which the light from the heavens struggled by casual openings, faintly relieving the gloom beneath.

"This is a nat'ral and-bush," half whispered Hurry, as if he felt that the place was devoted to secresy and watchfulness; "depend on it, old Tom has burrowed with the ark somewhere in this quarter. We will drop down with the current a short distance, and ferret him out."

"This seems no place for a vessel of any size," returned the other; "it appears to me, that we shall have hardly room enough for the canoe."

Hurry laughed at this suggestion, and, as it soon appeared, with reason; for, the fringe of bushes immediately on the shore of the lake was no sooner passed, than the adventurers found themselves in a narrow stream of a sufficient depth of limpid water, with a strong current, and a canopy of leaves, upheld by arches composed of the limbs of hoary trees.

Bushes lined the shores, as usual, but they left sufficient space between them to admit the passage of any thing that did not exceed twenty feet in width, and to allow of a perspective ahead of eight or ten times that distance.

Neither of our two adventurers used his paddle, except to keep the light bark in the centre of the current, but both watched each turning of the stream, of which there were two or three within the first hundred yards, with jealous vigilance. Turn after turn, however, was passed, and the canoe had dropped down with the current some little distance, when Hurry caught a bush, and arrested its movement, so suddenly and silently, as to denote some unusual motive for the act. Deerslayer laid his hand on the stock of his rifle, as soon as he noted this proceeding; but it was quite as much with a hunter's habit, as from any feeling of alarm.

"There the old fellow is!" whispered Hurry, pointing with a finger, and laughing heartily, though he carefully avoided making a noise, "ratting it away, just as I supposed; up to his knees in the mud and water, looking to the

traps and the bait. But, for the life of me, I can see nothing of the ark; though I 'll bet every skin I take this season, Jude isn't trusting her pretty little feet in the neighbourhood of that black mud. The gal 's more likely to be braiding her hair by the side of some spring, where she can see her own good looks, and collect scornful feelings ag'in us men." • •

"You over-judge young women; yes, you do, Hurry—who as often bethink them of their failings as they do of their perfections. I dare to say, this Judith, now, is no such admirer of herself, and no such scorner of our sex, as you seem to think; and that she is quite as likely to be sarving her father in the house, whereever that may be, as he is to be sarving her among the traps."

"It 's a pleasure to hear truth from a man's tongue, if it be only once in a girl's life," cried a pleasant, rich, and yet soft female voice, so near the canoe, as to make both the listeners start. "As for you, Master Hurry, fair words are so apt to choak you, that I no longer expect to hear them from your mouth; the last you uttered sticking in your throat, and coming near to death. But I 'm glad to see you keep

better society than formerly, and that they who know how to esteem and treat women, are not ashamed to journey in your company."

As this was said, a singularly handsome and youthful female face was thrust through an opening in the leaves within reach of Deerslayer's paddle. Its owner smiled graciously on the young man; and the frown that she cast on Hurry, though simulated and pettish, had the effect to render her beauty more striking by exhibiting the play of an expressive, but capricious countenance; one that seemed to change from the soft to the severe, the mirthful to the reproving, with facility and indifference.

A second look explained the nature of the surprise. Unwittingly, the men had dropped alongside of the ark, which had been purposely concealed in bushes, cut and arranged for the purpose; and Judith Hutter had merely pushed aside the leaves that lay before a window in order to show her face, and speak to them.

CHAPTER IV.

"And that timid fawn starts not with fear,
When I steal to her secret bower,
And that young May violet to me is dear,
And I visit the silent streamlet near,
To look on the lovely flower."

BRYANT.

THE ark, as the floating habitation of the Hutters was generally called, was a very simple contrivance. A large flat, or scow, composed the buoyant part of the vessel; and, in its centre, occupying the whole of its breadth, and about two-thirds of its length, stood a low fabric, resembling the castle in construction, though made of materials so light as barely to be bullet-proof. As the sides of the scow were a little higher than usual, and the interior of the cabin had no more elevation than was necessary for comfort, this unusual addition

had neither a very clumsy, nor a very obtrusive appearance. It was, in short, little more than a modern canal-boat, though more rudely constructed, of greater breadth than common, and bearing about it the signs of the wilderness in its bark-covered posts and roof. The scow, however, had been put together with some skill, being comparatively light, for its strength, and sufficiently manageable. The cabin was divided into two apartments, one of which served for a parlour, and the sleeping-room of the father, and the other was appropriated to the uses of the daughters. A very simple arrangement sufficed for the kitchen, which was in one end of the scow, and removed from the cabin, standing in the open air; the ark being altogether a summer habitation.

The "and-bush" as Hurry in his ignorance of English termed it, is quite as easily explained. In many parts of the lake and river, where the banks were steep and high, the smaller trees and larger bushes, as has been already mentioned, fairly overhung the stream, their branches not unfrequently dipping into the water. In some instances, they grew out

in nearly horizontal lines, for thirty or forty feet. The water being uniformly deepest near the shores, where the banks were highest, and the nearest to a perpendicular, Hutter had found no difficulty in letting the ark drop under one of these covers, where it had been anchored with a view to conceal its position; security requiring some such precautions in his view of the case. Once beneath the trees and bushes, a few stones fastened to the ends of the branches had caused them to bend sufficiently to dip into the river; and a few severed bushes, properly disposed, did the rest. The reader has seen that this cover was so complete, as to deceive two men accustomed to the woods, and who were actually in search of those it concealed; a circumstance that will be easily understood by those who are familiar with the matted and wild luxuriance of a virgin American forest, more especially in a rich soil.

The discovery of the ark produced very different effects on our two adventurers. As soon as the canoe could be got round to the proper opening, Hurry leaped on board, and in a minute was closely engaged in a gay, and a sort of recriminating discourse with Judith, apparently

forgetful of the existence of all the rest of the world. Not so with Deerslayer. He entered the ark with a slow, cautious step, examining every arrangement of the cover with curious and scrutinizing eyes. It is true, he cast one admiring glance at Judith, which was extorted by her brilliant and singular beauty; but even this could detain him but a single instant from the indulgenee of his interest in Hutter's contrivances. Step by step did he look into the construction of the singular abode, investigate its fastenings and strength, ascertain its means of defence, and make every inquiry that would be likely to occur to one whose thoughts dwelt principally on such expedients. Nor was the cover neglected. Of this he examined the whole minutely, his commendation escaping him more than once, in audible comments. Frontier usages admitting of this familiarity, he passed through the rooms as he had previously done at the castle, and opening a door, issued into the end of the scow opposite to that where he had left Hurry and Judith. Here he found the other sister, employed on some coarse needle-work, seated beneath the leafy canopy of the cover.

As Deerslayer's examination was by this

time ended, he dropped the butt of his rifle, and, leaning on the barrel with both hands, he turned towards the girl with an interest the singular beauty of her sister had not awakened. He had gathered from Hurry's remarks that Hetty was considered to have less intellect than ordinarily falls to the share of human beings; and his education among Indians had taught him to treat those who were thus afflicted by Providence with more than common tenderness. Nor was there any thing in Hetty Hutter's appearance, as so often happens, to weaken the interest her situation excited. An idiot she could not properly be termed, her mind being just enough enfeebled to lose most of those traits that are connected with the more artful qualities, and to retain its ingenuousness and love of truth. It had often been remarked of this girl, by the few who had seen her, and who possessed sufficient knowledge to discriminate, that her perception of the right seemed almost intuitive, while her aversion to the wrong formed so distinctive a feature of her mind, as to surround her with an atmosphere of pure morality; peculiarities that are not unfrequent with persons who are termed

feeble-minded; as if God had forbidden the evil spirits to invade a precinct so defenceless, with the benign purpose of extending a direct protection to those who had been left without the usual aids of humanity. Her person, too, was agreeable, having a strong resemblance to that of her sister, of which it was a subdued and humble copy. If it had none of the brilliancy of Judith's, the calm, quiet, almost holy expression of her meek countenance, seldom failed to win on the observer; and few noted it long, that did not begin to feel a deep and lasting interest in the girl. She had no colour, in common, nor was her simple mind apt to present images that caused her cheek to brighten; though she retained a modesty so innate, that it almost raised her to the unsuspecting purity of a being superior to human infirmities. Guileless, innocent, and without distrust, equally by nature and from her mode of life, Providence had, nevertheless, shielded her from harm by a halo of moral light, as it is said 'to temper the wind to the shorn lamb.'

"You are Hetty Hutter," said Deerslayer, in the way one puts a question unconsciously

to himself, assuming a kindness of tone and manner that were singularly adapted to win the confidence of her he addressed. "Harry Hurry has told me of you, and I know you must be the child."

"Yes, I'm Hetty Hutter," returned the girl, in a low, sweet voice, which nature, aided by some education, had preserved from vulgarity of tone and utterance; "I'm Hetty; Judith Hutter's sister; and Thomas Hutter's youngest daughter."

"I know your history, then, for Hurry Harry talks considerable, and he is free of speech when he can find other people's consarns to dwell on. You pass most of your life on the lake, Hetty."

"Certainly. Mother is dead; father is gone a-trapping, and Judith and I stay at home. What's *your* name?"

"That's a question more easily asked than it is answered, young woman; seeing that I'm so young, and yet have borne more names than some of the greatest chiefs in all America."

"But you 've *got* a name—you don't throw away one name before you come honestly by another?"

"I hope not, gal—I hope not. My names have come nat'rally; and I suppose the one I bear now will be of no great lasting, since the Delawares seldom settle on a man's ra'al title, until such time as he has an opportunity of showing his true natur' in the council, or on the war-path; which has never behappened me; seeing, firstly, because I'm not born a red-skin, and have no right to sit in *their* councillings, and am much too humble to be called on for opinions from the great of my own colour; and, secondly, because this is the first war that has befallen in my time, and no inimy has yet inroaded far enough into the Colony, to be reached by an arm even longer than mine."

"Tell me your names," added Hetty, looking up at him artlessly, "and, may be, I'll tell you your character."

"There is some truth in that, I'll not deny, though it often fails. Men are deceived in other men's characters, and frequently give 'em names they by no means desarve. You can see the truth of this in the Mingo names, which, in their own tongue, signify the same things as the Delaware names—at least, so they tell me, for I know little of that tribe, unless it

be by report—and no one can say they are as honest, or as upright a nation. I put no great dependence, therefore, on names."

"Tell me *all* your names," repeated the girl, earnestly, for her mind was too simple to separate things from professions, and she *did* attach importance to a name; "I want to know what to think of you."

"Well, sartain; I've no objection, and you shall hear them all. In the first place, then, I'm Christian, and white-born, like yourself, and my parents had a name that came down from father to son, as is a part of their gifts. My father was called Bumppo; and I was named after him, of course, the given name being Nathaniel, or Natty, as most people saw fit to tarm it."

"Yes, yes — Natty—and Hetty—" interrupted the girl quickly, and looking up from her work again with a smile; "you are Natty, and I'm Hetty—though you are Bumppo, and I'm Hutter. Bumppo isn't as pretty as Hutter, is it?"

"Why, that's as people fancy. Bumppo has no lofty sound, I admit; and yet men have bumped through the world with it. I did not go by this name, howsever very long; for the

76436

Delawares soon found out, or thought they found out, that I was not given to lying, and they called me, firstly, Straight-tongue."

"That's a *good* name," interrupted Hetty, earnestly, and in a positive manner; "don't tell me there's no virtue in names!"

"I do not say *that*, for perhaps I desarved to be so called, lies being no favourites with me as they are with some. After a while they found out that I was quick of foot, and then they called me 'The Pigeon;' which, you know, has a swift wing, and flies in a direct line."

"*That* was a *pretty* name!" exclaimed Hetty; "pigeons are pretty birds!"

"Most things that God has created are pretty, in their way, my good gal, though they get to be deformed by mankind, so as to change their natur's, as well as their appearance. From carrying messages and striking blind trails, I got, at last, to following the hunters, when it was thought I was quicker and surer at finding the game than most lads, and then they called me the 'Lap-ear;' as, they said, I partook of the sagacity of a hound."

"That's not so pretty," answered Hetty; "I hope you didn't keep *that* name long."

"Not after I was rich enough to buy a rifle,"

returned the other, betraying a little pride through his usually quiet and subdued manner; "*then* it was seen I could keep a wigwam in ven'son; and, in time, I got the name of 'Deerslayer,' which is that I now bear; homely as some will think it, who set more valie on the scalp of a fellow-mortal, than on the horns of a buck."

"Well, Deerslayer, I'm not one of them," answered Hetty, simply; "Judith likes soldiers and flary coats, and fine feathers; but they're all naught to me. *She* says the officers are great, and gay, and of soft speech; but they make me shudder, for their business is to kill their fellow-creatures. I like your calling better; and your last name is a very good one —better than Natty Bumppo."

"This is nat'ral in one of your turn of mind, Hetty, and much as I should have expected. They tell me your sister is handsome—oncommon, for a mortal; and beauty is apt to seek admiration."

"Did you never see Judith?" demanded the girl with quick earnestness; "if you never have, go at once, and look at her. Even Hurry Harry isn't more pleasant to look at; though *she* is a woman, and *he* is a man."

Deerslayer regarded the girl, for a moment, with concern. Her pale face had flushed a little, and her eye, usually so mild and serene, brightened as she spoke in the way to betray the inward impulses.

"Ay, Hurry Harry," he muttered to himself, as he walked through the cabin towards the other end of the boat; "this comes of good looks, if a light tongue has had no consarn in it. It's easy to see which way that poor creatur's feelin's are leanin', whatever may be the case with your Jude's."

But an interruption was put to the gallantry of Hurry—the coquetry of his mistress—the thoughts of Deerslayer, and the gentle feelings of Hetty, by the sudden appearance of the canoe of the ark's owner in the narrow opening among the bushes, that served as a sort of moat to his position. It would seem that Hutter, or Floating Tom, as he was familiarly called by all the hunters who knew his habits, recognized the canoe of Hurry, for he expressed no surprise at finding him in the scow. On the contrary, his reception was such as to denote not only gratification, but a pleasure, mingled with a little disappointment, at his not having made his appearance some days sooner.

"I look'd for you last week," he said, in a half-grumbling, half-welcoming manner; "and was disappointed uncommonly that you didn't arrive. There came a runner through, to warn all the trappers and hunters that the Colony and the Canadas were again in trouble; and I felt lonesome, up in these mountains, with three scalps to see to, and only one pair of hands to protect them."

"That's reasonable," returned March; "and 't was feelin' like a parent. No doubt, if I had two such darters as Judith and Hetty, my exper'ence would tell the same story, though, in gin'ral, I am just as well satisfied with having the nearest neighbour fifty miles off, as when he is within call."

"Notwithstanding, you didn't choose to come into the wilderness alone, now you knew that the Canada savages are likely to be stirring," returned Hutter, giving a sort of distrustful, and, at the same time, inquiring glance at Deerslayer.

"Why should I? They say a bad companion, on a journey, helps to shorten the path; and this young man I account to be a reasonably good one. This is Deerslayer, old

Tom, a noted hunter among the Delawares, and Christian-born, and Christian-edicated, too, like you and me. The lad is not parfect, perhaps, but there's worse men in the country that he came from, and, it's likely, he'll find some that's no better in this part of the world. Should we have occasion to defend our traps and the territory, he'll be useful in feeding us all; for he's a reg'lar dealer in ven'son."

"Young man, you are welcome," growled Tom, thrusting a hard, bony hand towards the youth, as a pledge of his sincerity; "in such times, a white-face is a friend's, and I count on you as a support. Children, sometimes, make a stout heart feeble, and these two daughters of mine give me more concern than all my traps, and skins, and rights in the country."

"That's nat'ral!" cried Hurry. "Yes, Deerslayer, you and I don't know it, yet, by exper'ence; but, on the whole, I consider that as nat'ral. If we *had* darters, it's more than probable we should have some such feelin's; and I honour the man that owns 'em. As for Judith, old man, I enlist, at once, as her soldier, and here is Deerslayer to help you to take care of Hetty."

"Many thanks to you, Master March," returned the beauty, in a full, rich voice, and with an accuracy of intonation and utterance that she shared in common with her sister, and which showed that she had been better taught than their father's life and appearance would give reason to expect; "many thanks to you; but Judith Hutter has the spirit and the experience that will make her depend more on herself, than on good-looking rovers like you. Should there be need to face the savages, do you land, with my father, instead of burrowing in the huts, under the show of defending us females, and——

"Girl—girl," interrupted the father, "quiet that glib tongue of thine, and hear the truth. There are savages on the lake shore, already, and no man can say how near to us they may be at this very moment, or when we may hear more from them!"

"If this be true, Master Hutter," said Hurry, whose change of countenance denoted how serious he deemed the information, though it did not denote any unmanly alarm; "if this be true, your ark is in a most misfortunate position; for, though the cover did deceive Deer-

slayer and myself, it would hardly be overlooked by a full-blooded Indian, who was out seriously in s'arch of scalps!"

"I think as you do, Hurry, and wish, with all my heart, we lay anywhere else, at this moment, than in this narrow, crooked stream, which has many advantages to hide in, but which is almost fatal to them that are discovered. The savages are near us, moreover, and the difficulty is, to get out of the river without being shot down like deer standing at a lick!"

"Are you sartain, Master Hutter, that the red-skins you dread are ra'al Canadas?" asked Deerslayer, in a modest, but earnest manner. "Have you seen any; and can you describe their paint?"

"I have fallen in with the signs of their being in the neighbourhood, but have seen none of 'em. I was down stream, a mile or so, looking to my traps, when I struck a fresh trail, crossing the corner of a swamp and moving northward. The man had not passed an hour; and I know'd it for an Indian footstep by the size of the foot and the intoe, even before I found a worn moccasin, which its owner had

dropped as useless. For that matter, I found the spot where he halted to make a new one, which was only a few yards from the place where he had dropped the old one."

"That doesn't look much like a red-skin on the war-path!" returned the other, shaking his head. "An exper'enced warrior, at least, would have burned, or buried, or sunk in the river, such signs of his passage; and your trail is, quite likely, a peaceable trail. But the moccasin may greatly relieve my mind if you bethought you of bringing it off. I've come here to meet a young chief, myself; and his course would be much in the direction you've mentioned. The trail may have been his'n."

"Hurry Harry, you're well acquainted with this young man, I hope, who has meetings with savages in a part of the country where he has never been before?" demanded Hutter in a tone and in a manner that sufficiently indicated the motive of the question; these rude beings seldom hesitating, on the score of delicacy, to betray their feelings. "Treachery is an Indian virtue; and the whites, that live much in their tribes, soon catch their ways and practices."

"True—true as the Gospel, old Tom; but

not personable to Deerslayer, who's a young man of truth, if he has no other ricommend. I'll answer for his *honesty*, whatever I may do for his valour in battle."

"I should like to know his errand in this strange quarter of the country?"

"That is soon told, Master Hutter," said the young man with the composure of one who kept a clean conscience; "I think, moreover, you've a *right* to ask it. The father of two such darters, who occupies a lake, after your fashion, has just the same right to inquire into a stranger's business in his neighbourhood, as the Colony would have to demand the reason why the Frenchers put more rijiments than common along the lines. No, no, I'll not deny your right to know why a stranger comes into your habitation, or country, in times as serious as these."

"If such is your way of thinking, friend, let me hear your story, without more words."

"'Tis soon told, as I said afore; and shall be honestly told. I'm a young man, and, as yet, have never been on a war-path; but, no sooner did the news come among the Delawares, that wampum and a hatchet were about

to be sent in to the tribe, than they wished me to go out among the people of my own colour, and get the exact state of things for 'em. This I did; and, after delivering my talk to the chiefs, on my return, I met an officer of the crown on the Scoharie, who had moneys to send to some of the fri'ndly tribes, that live further west. This was thought a good occasion for Chingachgook, a young chief who has never struck a foe, and myself, to go on our first war-path in company; and an app'intment was made for us, by an old Delaware, to meet at the rock near the foot of this lake. I'll not deny that Chingachgook has *another* object in view, but it has no consarn with any here, and is his secret, and not mine; therefore I'll say no more about it."

"'Tis something about a young woman," interrupted Judith, hastily; then laughing at her own impetuosity, and even having the grace to colour a little at the manner in which she had betrayed her readiness to impute such a motive. "If 'tis neither war, nor a hunt, it must be love."

"Ay, it comes easy for the young and handsome, who hear so much of them feelin's, to

suppose that they lie at the bottom of most proceedin's; but, on that head, I say nothin'. Chingachgook is to meet me at the rock, an hour afore sunset to-morrow evening, after which we shall go our way together, molesting none but the king's inimies, who are lawfully our own. Knowing Hurry of old, who once trapped in our hunting-grounds, and falling in with him on the Schoharie, just as he was on the p'int of starting for his summer h'ants, we agreed to journey in company; not so much from fear of the Mingos, as from good fellowship, and, as he says, to shorten a long road."

"And you think the trail I saw may have been that of your friend, ahead of his time?" said Hutter.

"That's my idee; which may be wrong, but which may be right. If I saw the moccasin, however, I could tell in a minute, whether it is made in the Delaware fashion or not."

"Here it is, then," said the quick-witted Judith, who had already gone to the canoe in quest of it; "tell us what it says; friend or enemy. You look honest; and *I* believe all you say, whatever father may think."

"That's the way with you, Jude; for ever

finding out friends, where I distrust foes," grumbled Tom: "but, speak out, young man, and tell us what you think of the moccasin."

"That's not Delaware-made," returned Deerslayer, examining the worn and rejected covering for the foot with a cautious eye; "I'm too young on a war-path to be positive, but, I should say, that moccasin has a northern look, and comes from beyond the great lakes."

"If such is the case, we ought not to lie here a minute longer than is necessary," said Hutter, glancing through the leaves of his cover, as if he already distrusted the presence of an enemy on the opposite shore of the narrow and sinuous stream. "It wants but an hour, or so of night, and to move in the dark, will be impossible, without making a noise that would betray us. Did you hear the echo of a piece in the mountains, half an hour since?"

"Yes, old man, and heard the piece itself," answered Hurry, who now felt the indiscretion of which he had been guilty, "for the last was fired from my own shoulder."

"I feared it came from the French Indians; still, it may put them on the look out, and be

a means of discovering us. You did wrong to fire in war-time, unless there was good occasion."

"So I begin to think, myself, uncle Tom; and yet, if a man can't trust himself to let off his rifle in a wilderness that is a thousand miles square, lest some inimy should hear it, where's the use in carrying one!"

Hutter now held a long consultation with his two guests, in which the parties came to a true understanding of their situation. He explained the difficulty that would exist in attempting to get the ark out of so swift and narrow a stream in the dark, without making a noise that could not fail to attract Indian ears. Any strollers in their vicinity would keep near the river, or the lake; but the former had swampy shores in many places, and was both so crooked, and so fringed with bushes, that it was quite possible to move by day-light, without incurring much danger of being seen. More was to be apprehended, perhaps, from the ear, than from the eye, especially as long as they were in the short, straitened, and canopied reaches of the stream.

"I never drop down into this cover, which

is handy to my traps, and safer than the lake from curious eyes, without providing the means of getting out ag'in," continued this singular being; "and that is easier done by a pull than a push. My anchor is now lying above the suction in the open lake; and here is a line, you see, to haul us up to it. Without some such help, a single pair of hands would make heavy work in forcing a scow, like this, up stream. I have a sort of a crab, too, that lightens the pull on occasion. Jude can use the oar, astarn, as well as myself; and, when we fear no enemy, to get out of the river gives us but little trouble.

"What should we gain, Master Hutter, by changing the position?" asked Deerslayer, with a good deal of earnestness; "this is a safe cover; and a stout defence might be made from the inside of this cabin. I've never fou't, unless in the way of tradition; but, it seems to me, we might beat off twenty Mingos with palisades like them afore us."

"Ay, ay; you've never fought, except in traditions, that's plain enough, young man! Did you ever see as broad a sheet of water as this above us, before you came in upon it with Hurry?"

"I can't say that I ever did," Deerslayer answered, modestly. "Youth is the time to l'arn; and I 'm far from wishing to raise my voice in council, afore it is justified by expe-r'ence."

"Well, then, I 'll teach you the disadvantage of fighting in this position, and the advantage of taking to the open lake. Here, you may see, the savages will know where to aim every shot; and it would be too much to hope that *some* would not find their way through the crevices of the logs. Now, on the other hand, we should have nothing but a forest to aim at. Then we are not safe from fire, here; the bark of this roof being little better than so much kindling-wood. The castle, too, might be entered and ransacked in my absence, and all my possessions overrun and destroyed. Once in the lake, we can be attacked only in boats, or on rafts—shall have a fair chance with the enemy—and can protect the castle with the ark. Do you understand this reasoning, youngster?"

"It sounds well—yes, it has a rational sound; and I'll not gainsay it."

"Well, old Tom," cried Hurry, "if we are to move, the sooner we make a beginning, the

sooner we shall know whether we are to have our scalps for night-caps, or not."

As this proposition was self-evident, no one denied its justice. The three men, after a short preliminary explanation, now set about their preparations to move the ark in earnest. The slight fastenings were quickly loosened; and, by hauling on the line, the heavy craft slowly emerged from the cover. It was no sooner free from the incumbrance of the branches, than it swung into the stream, sheering quite close to the western shore, by the force of the current. Not a soul on board heard the rustling of the branches, as the cabin came against the bushes and trees of the western bank, without a feeling of uneasiness; for no one knew at what moment, or in what place, a secret and murderous enemy might unmask himself. Perhaps the gloomy light, that still struggled through the impending canopy of leaves, or found its way through the narrow, riband-like opening, which seemed to mark, in the air above, the course of the river that flowed beneath, aided in augmenting the appearance of the danger; for it was little more than sufficient to render objects visible, with-

out giving up all their outlines at a glance. Although the sun had not absolutely set, it had withdrawn its direct rays from the valley; and the hues of evening were beginning to gather around objects that stood uncovered, rendering those within the shadows of the woods, still more sombre and gloomy.

No interruption followed the movement, however, and, as the men continued to haul on the line, the ark passed steadily ahead, the great breadth of the scow preventing its sinking into the water, and, from offering much resistance to the progress of the swift element beneath its bottom. Hutter, too, had adopted a precaution, suggested by experience, which might have done credit to a seaman, and which completely prevented any of the annoyances and obstacles which, otherwise, would have attended the short turns of the river. As the ark descended, heavy stones, attached to the line, were dropped in the centre of the stream, forming local anchors, each of which was kept from dragging by the assistance of those above it, until the uppermost of all was reached, which got its "backing" from the anchor, or grapnel, that lay well out in the lake. In con-

sequence of this expedient, the ark floated clear of the incumbrances of the shore, against which it would otherwise have been unavoidably hauled at every turn, producing embarrassments that Hutter, single-handed, would have found it very difficult to overcome.

Favoured by this foresight, and stimulated by the apprehension of discovery, Floating Tom and his two athletic companions hauled the ark ahead, with quite as much rapidity as comported with the strength of the line. At every turn in the stream, a stone was raised from the bottom, when the direction of the scow changed to one that pointed towards the stone that lay above. In this manner, with the channel buoyed out for him, as a sailor might term it, did Hutter move forward, occasionally urging his friends, in a low and guarded voice, to increase their exertions, and then, as occasions offered, warning them against efforts that might, at particular moments, endanger all by too much zeal. In spite of their long familiarity with the woods, the gloomy character of the shaded river added to the uneasiness that each felt; and when the ark reached the first bend in the Susquehannah, and the eye caught

a glimpse of the broader expanse of the lake, all felt a relief, that perhaps neither would have been willing to confess. Here the last stone was raised from the bottom, and the line led directly towards the grapnel, which, as Hutter had explained, was dropped above the suction of the current.

"Thank God!" ejaculated Hurry, "*there* is day-light, and we shall soon have a chance of *seeing* our inimies, if we are to *feel* 'em.

"That is more than you, or any man can say," growled Hutter. "There is no spot so likely to harbour a party, as the shore around the outlet; and the moment we clear these trees, and get into open water, will be the most trying time, since it will leave the enemy a cover, while it puts us out of one. Judith, girl; do you and Hetty leave the oar to take care of itself, and go within the cabin; and be mindful not to show your faces at a window; for they who will look at them won't stop to praise their beauty. And now, Hurry, we 'll step into this outer room, ourselves, and haul through the door, where we shall all be safe, from a surprise, at least. Friend Deerslayer, as the current is lighter, and the line has all

the strain on it that is prudent, do you keep moving from window to window taking care not to let your head be seen, if you set any value on life. No one knows when, or where, we shall hear from our neighbours."

Deerslayer complied with a sensation that had nothing in common with fear, but which had all the interest of a perfectly novel, and a most exciting situation. For the first time in his life, he was in the vicinity of enemies, or had good reason to think so; and that, too, under all the thrilling circumstances of Indian surprises and Indian artifices. As he took his stand at a window, the ark was just passing through the narrowest part of the stream, a point where the water first entered what was properly termed the river, and where the trees fairly interlocked over-head, causing the current to rush into an arch of verdure; a feature as appropriate and peculiar to the country, perhaps, as that of Switzerland, where the rivers come rushing literally from chambers of ice.

The ark was in the act of passing the last curve of this leafy entrance, as Deerslayer, having examined all that could be seen of the east-

ern bank of the river, crossed the room to look from the opposite window at the western. His arrival at this aperture was most opportune, for he had no sooner placed his eye at a crack, than a sight met his gaze that might well have alarmed a sentinel so young and inexperienced. A sapling overhung the water, in nearly half a circle, having first grown towards the light, and then been pressed down into this form by the weight of the snows; a circumstance of common occurrence in the American woods. On this tree no less than six Indians had already appeared, others standing ready to follow them, as they left room; each evidently bent on running out on the trunk, and dropping on the roof of the ark, as it passed beneath. This would have been an exploit of no great difficulty, the inclination of the tree admitting of an easy passage, the adjoining branches offering ample support for the hands, and the fall being too trifling to be apprehended. When Deerslayer first saw this party, it was just unmasking itself by ascending the part of the tree nearest to the earth, or that which was much the most difficult to overcome; and his knowledge of Indian habits told him, at once, that

they were all in their war-paint, and belonged to a hostile tribe.

"Pull, Hurry," he cried; "pull for your life, and as you love Judith Hutter! Pull, man, pull!"

This call was made to one that the young man knew had the strength of a giant. It was so earnest and solemn, that both Hutter and March felt it was not idly given, and they applied all their force to the line simultaneously, and at a most critical moment. The scow redoubled its motion, and seemed to glide from under the tree as if conscious of the danger that was impending over-head. Perceiving that they were discovered, the Indians uttered the fearful war-whoop, and running forward on the tree, leaped desperately towards their fancied prize. There were six on the tree, and each made the effort. All but their leader fell into the river, more or less distant from the ark, as they came, sooner or later, to the leaping-place. The chief, who had taken the dangerous post in advance, having an earlier opportunity than the others, struck the scow just within the stern. The fall proved so much greater than he had anticipated, he was slightly stunned, and, for a

moment, he remained half bent and unconscious of his situation. At this instant, Judith rushed from the cabin, her beauty heightened by the excitement that produced the bold act, which flushed her cheek to crimson, and, throwing all her strength into the effort, she pushed the intruder over the edge of the scow, headlong into the river. This decided feat was no sooner accomplished than the woman resumed her sway; Judith looked over the stern to ascertain what had become of the man, and the expression of her eyes softened to concern; next, her cheek crimsoned between shame and surprise, at her own temerity; and then she laughed, in her own merry and sweet manner. All this occupied less than a minute, when the arm of Deerslayer was thrown around her waist, and she was dragged swiftly within the protection of the cabin. This retreat was not effected too soon. Scarcely were the two in safety, when the forest was filled with yells, and bullets began to patter against the logs.

The ark being in swift motion all this while, it was beyond the danger of pursuit by the time these little events had occurred; and the savages, as soon as the first burst of their anger

had subsided, ceased firing, with the consciousness that they were expending their ammunition in vain. When the scow came up over her grapnel, Hutter tripped the latter, in a way not to impede the motion; and being now beyond the influence of the current, the vessel continued to drift ahead, until fairly in the open lake, though still near enough to the land to render exposure to a rifle-bullet dangerous. Hutter and March got out two small sweeps, and, covered by the cabin, they soon urged the ark far enough from the shore, to leave no inducement to their enemies to make any further attempt to injure them.

CHAPTER V.

"Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play:
For some must watch, while some must sleep;
Thus runs the world away."

SHAKSPEARE.

ANOTHER consultation took place in the forward part of the scow, at which both Judith and Hetty were present. As no danger could now approach unseen, immediate uneasiness had given place to the concern which attended the conviction that enemies were, in considerable force, on the shores of the lake, and that they might be sure no practicable means of accomplishing their own destruction would be neglected. As a matter of course, Hutter felt these truths the deepest, his daughters having

an habitual reliance on his resources, and knowing too little to appreciate fully all the risks they ran; while his male companions were at liberty to quit him at any moment they saw fit. His first remark showed that he had an eye to the latter circumstance, and might have betrayed, to a keen observer, the apprehension that was, just then, uppermost.

"We 've a great advantage over the Iroquois, or the enemy, whoever they are, in being afloat," he said. "There 's not a canoe on the lake, that I don't know where it's hid; and now yours is here, Hurry, there are but three more on the land, and they 're so snug in hollow logs, that I don't believe the Indians could find them, let them try ever so long."

"There 's no telling that—no one can say that," put in Deerslayer; "a hound is not more sartain on the scent than a red-skin when he expects to get any thing by it. Let this party see scalps afore 'em, or plunder, or honour, accordin' to their idees of what honour is, and 't will be a tight log that hides a canoe from their eyes."

"You 're right, Deerslayer," cried Harry March; "you 're downright Gospel, in this

matter, and I rej'ice that my bunch of bark is safe enough, here, within reach of my arm. I calcilate they 'll be at all the rest of the canoes, afore to-morrow night, if they are in ra'al 'arnest to smoke you out, old Tom, and we may as well overhaul our paddles for a pull."

Hutter made no immediate reply. He looked about him in silence for quite a minute; examining the sky, the lake, and the belt of forest which enclosed it, as it might be hermetically, like one consulting their signs. Nor did he find any alarming symptoms. The boundless woods were sleeping in the deep repose of nature, the heavens were placid, but still luminous with the light of the retreating sun, while the lake looked more lovely and calm than it had before done that day. It was a scene altogether soothing, and of a character to lull the passions into a species of holy calm. How far this effect was produced, however, on the party in the ark, must appear in the progress of our narrative.

"Judith," called out the father, when he had taken this close, but short survey of the omens, "night is at hand; find our friends food; a long march gives a sharp appetite."

"We 're not starving, Master Hutter," March observed, "for we filled up just as we reached the lake, and, for one, I prefar the company of Jude, even to her supper. This quiet evening is very agreeable to sit by her side."

"Natur' is natur'," objected Hutter, "and must be fed. Judith, see to the meal, and take your sister to help you. I 've a little discourse to hold with you, friends," he continued, as soon as his daughters were out of hearing, "and wish the girls away. You see my situation; and I should like to hear your opinions concerning what is best to be done. Three times have I been burnt out, already, but that was on the shore; and I 've considered myself as pretty safe, ever since I got the castle built, and the ark afloat. My other accidents, however, happened in peaceable times, being nothing more than such flurries as a man must meet with in the woods; but this matter looks serious, and your ideas would greatly relieve my mind."

"It 's my notion, old Tom, that you, and your huts, and your traps, and your whole possessions, hereaway, are in desperate

jippardy," returned the matter-of-fact Hurry, who saw no use in concealment. "Accordin' to my idees of valie, they 're altogether not worth half as much to-day, as they was yesterday, nor would I give more for 'em, taking the pay in skins."

"Then I've children!" continued the father, making the allusion in a way that it might have puzzled even an indifferent observer to say was intended as a bait, or as an exclamation of paternal concern; "daughters, as you know, Hurry; and good girls, too, I may say, though I *am* their father."

"A man may say any thing, Master Hutter, particularly when pressed by time and circumstances. You've darters, as you say, and one of them hasn't her equal on the frontiers for good looks, whatever she may have for good-behaviour. As for poor Hetty, she's Hetty Hutter, and that's as much as one can say about the poor thing. Give me Jude, if her conduct was only equal to her looks!"

"I see, Harry March, I can only count on you as a fair-weathered friend; and I suppose that your companion will be of the same way of thinking," returned the other, with a slight

show of pride, that was not altogether without dignity; "well; I must depend on Providence which will not turn a deaf ear, perhaps, to a father's prayers."

"If you've understood Hurry, here, to mean that he intends to desart you," said Deerslayer, with an earnest simplicity that gave double assurance of its truth, "I *think* you do him injustice; as I *know* you do me, in supposing I would follow him, was he so ontrue-hearted as to leave a family of his own colour in such a strait as this. I've come on this lake, Master Hutter to rende'vous a fri'nd, and I only wish ne was here, himself, as I make no doubt he will be at sunset to-morrow, when you'd have another rifle to aid you; an inexper'enced one, I'll allow, like my own, but one that has proved true so often ag'in the game, big and little, that I'll answer for its sarvice ag'in mortals."

"May I depend on *you* to stand by me and my daughters, then, Deerslayer?" demanded the old man, with a father's anxiety in his countenance.

"That may you, Floating Tom, if that's your name; and as a brother would stand by a sister—a husband his wife—or a suitor his

sweetheart. In this straight you may count on me through all advarsities; and, I think, Hurry does discredit to his natur' and wishes, if you can't count on him."

"Not he," cried Judith, thrusting her handsome face out of the door; "his nature is hurry, as well as his name, and he 'll hurry off, as soon as he thinks his fine figure in danger. Neither 'old Tom' nor his 'gals' will depend much on Master March, now they know him, but *you* they will rely on, Deerslayer; for your honest face and honest heart, tell us that what you promise you will perform."

This was said, as much, perhaps, in affected scorn for Hurry as in sincerity. Still, it was not said without feeling. The fine face of Judith sufficiently proved the latter circumstance; and if the conscious March fancied that he had never seen in it a stronger display of contempt—a feeling in which the beauty was apt to indulge—than while she was looking at him, it certainly seldom exhibited more of womanly softness and sensibility than when her speaking blue eyes were turned on his travelling companion.

"Leave us, Judith," Hutter ordered sternly,

before either of the young men could reply; "leave us; and do not return until you come with the venison and fish. The girl has been spoilt by the flattery of the officers, who sometimes find their way up here, Master March, and you'll not think any harm of her silly words."

"You never said truer syllable, old Tom," retorted Hurry, who smarted under Judith's observations; "the devil-tongued youngsters of the garrison have proved her undoing! I scarce know Jude any longer, and shall soon take to admiring her sister; who is getting to be much more to my fancy."

"I'm glad to hear this, Harry, and look upon it as a sign that you're coming to your right senses. Hetty would make a much safer and more rational companion than Jude, and would be much the most likely to listen to your suit, as the officers have, I greatly fear, unsettled her sister's mind."

"No man need a safer wife than Hetty," said Hurry, laughing, "though I'll not answer for her being of the most rational. But, no matter; Deerslayer has not misconceived me, when he told you I should be found at my

post. I'll not quit *you*, uncle Tom, just now, whatever may be my feelin's and intentions respecting your eldest darter."

Hurry had a respectable reputation for prowess among his associates, and Hutter heard this pledge with a satisfaction that was not concealed. Even the great personal strength of such an aid, became of moment in moving the ark, as well as in the species of hand-to-hand conflicts that were not unfrequent in the woods; and no commander, who was hard pressed, could feel more joy at hearing of the arrival of reinforcements than the borderer experienced at being told this important auxiliary was not about to quit him. A minute before, Hutter would have been well contented to compromise his danger, by entering into a compact to act only on the defensive; but no sooner did he feel some security on this point, than the restlessness of man induced him to think of the means of carrying the war into the enemy's country.

"High prices are offered for scalps on both sides," he observed with a grim smile, as if he felt the force of the inducement, at the very time he wished to affect a superiority to carn-

ing money by means that the ordinary feelings of those who aspire to be civilized men repudiated, even while they were adopted. "It isn't right, perhaps, to take gold for human blood; and yet, when mankind is busy in killing one another, there can be no great harm in adding a little bit of skin to the plunder. What's your sentiments, Hurry, touching these p'ints."

"That you've made a vast mistake, old man, in calling savage blood, human blood, at all. I think no more of a red-skin's scalp, than I do of a pair of wolf's ears; and would just as lief finger money for one, as for the other. With *white* people 't is different, for they've a nat'ral avarsion to being scalped; whereas your Indian shaves his head in readiness for the knife, and leaves a lock of hair, by way of braggadocio, that one can lay hold of in the bargain."

"That's manly, however, and I felt, from the first, that we had only to get you on our side, to have you heart and hand," returned Tom, losing all his reserve, as he gained a renewed confidence in the disposition of his companion. "Something more may turn up from this inroad of the red-skins, than they bargained for.

Deerslayer, I conclude you're of Hurry's way of thinking, and look upon money 'arned in this way as being as likely to pass, as money 'arned in trapping or hunting."

"I've no such feelin', nor any wish to harbour it, not I," returned the other. "My gifts are not scalpers' gifts, but such as belong to my religion and colour. I'll stand by you, old man, in the ark or in the castle, the canoe, or the woods, but I'll not unhumanize my natur' by falling into ways that God intended for another race. If you and Hurry have got any thoughts that lean towards the Colony's gold, go by yourselves in s'arch of it, and leave the females to my care. Much as I must differ from you both on all gifts that do not properly belong to a white man, we shall agree that it is the duty of the strong to take care of the weak, especially when the last belong to them that natur' intended man to protect and console by his gentleness and strength."

"Hurry Harry, that is a lesson you might learn and practice on to some advantage," said the sweet, but spirited voice of Judith from the cabin; a proof that she had overheard all that had hitherto been said."

"No more of this, Jude," called out the

father angrily. "Move further off; we are about to talk of matters unfit for a woman to listen to."

Hutter did not take any steps, however, to ascertain whether he was obeyed or not; but dropping his voice a little, he pursued the discourse.

"The young man is right, Hurry," he said; "and we can leave the children in his care. Now, my idea is just this; and I think you'll agree that it is rational and correct. There's a large party of these savages on the shore; and, though I didn't tell it before the girls, for they're womanish, and apt to be troublesome when anything like real work is to be done, there's women among 'em. This I know from moccasin prints; and 't is likely they are hunters, after all, who have been out so long that they know nothing of the war, or of the bounties."

"In which case, old Tom, why was their first salute an attempt to cut all our throats?"

"We don't know that their design was so bloody. It's natural and easy for an Indian to fall into ambushes and surprises; and, no doubt, they wished to get on board the ark first, and to make their conditions afterwards.

That a disapp'inted savage should fire at us, is in rule; and I think nothing of that. Besides, how often have they burned me out, and robbed my traps—ay, and pulled trigger on me, in the most peaceful times?"

"The blackguards will do such things, I must allow, and we pay 'em off pretty much in their own c'ine. Women would not be on the war-path, sartainly; and, so far, there's reason in your idee."

"Nor would a hunter be in his war-paint," returned Deerslayer. "I saw the Mingos, and know that they are out on the trail of mortal men; and not for beaver or deer."

"There you have it ag'in, old fellow," said Hurry. "In the way of an eye, now, I'd as soon trust this young man, as trust the oldest settler in the Colony; if he says paint, why paint it was."

"Then a hunting-party and a war-party have met, for women must have been with 'em. It's only a few days since the runner went through with the tidings of the troubles; and, it may be, that warriors have come out to call in their women and children, and to get an early blow."

"That would stand the courts, and is just

the truth," cried Hurry; "you've got it now, old Tom, and I should like to hear what you mean to make out of it?"

"The bounty;" returned the other, looking up at his attentive companion, in a cool, sullen manner, in which, however, heartless cupidity, and indifference to the means, were far more conspicuous than any feelings of animosity or revenge. "If there's women, there's children; and big and little have scalps; the Colony pays for all alike."

"More shame to it, that it should do so," interrupted Deerslayer; "more shame to it, that it don't understand its gifts, and pay greater attention to the will of God."

"Harken to reason, lad, and don't cry out afore you understand a case," returned the unmoved Hurry; "the savages scalp your fri'nds the Delawares or Mohicans, whichever they may be, among the rest; and why shouldn't we scalp? I will own, it would be ag'in right for you and me, now, to go into the settlements and bring out scalps, but it's a very different matter as consarns Indians. A man shouldn't take scalps, if he isn't ready to be scalped, himself, on fitting occasions. One good turn de-

sarves another, all the world over. That's reason, and I believe it to be good religion."

"Ay, Master Hurry," again interrupted the rich voice of Judith, "is it religion to say that one *bad* turn deserves another?"

"I'll never reason ag'in you, Judy, for you beat me with beauty, if you can't with sense. Here's the Canadas paying their Indians for scalps, and why not we pay——"

"*Our* Indians!" exclaimed the girl, laughing with a sort of melancholy merriment. "Father, father! think no more of this, and listen to the advice of Deerslayer, who has a conscience; which is more than I can say, or think, of Harry March."

Hutter now rose, and, entering the cabin, he compelled his daughters to go into the adjoining room, when he secured both the doors and returned. Then he and Hurry pursued the subject; but, as the purport of all that was material in this discourse will appear in the narrative, it need not be related here in detail. The reader, however, can have no difficulty in comprehending the morality that presided over their conference. It was, in truth, that which, in some form or other, rules most of the acts

of men, and in which the controlling principle is, that one wrong will justify another. Their enemies paid for scalps; and this was sufficient to justify the Colony for retaliating. It is true, the French used the same argument, a circumstance, as Hurry took occasion to observe, in answer to one of Deerslayer's objections; that proved its truth, as mortal enemies would not be likely to have recourse to the same reason, unless it were a good one. But, neither Hutter nor Hurry was a man likely to stick at trifles, in matters connected with the rights of the aborigines, since it is one of the consequences of aggression, that it hardens the conscience as the only means of quieting it. In the most peaceable state of the country, a species of warfare was carried on between the Indians, especially those of the Canadas, and men of their caste; and, the moment an actual and recognised warfare existed, it was regarded as the means of lawfully revenging a thousand wrongs, real and imaginary. Then, again there was some truth, and a good deal of expediency in the principle of retaliation, of which they both availed themselves, in particular, to answer the objections of their juster-minded and more scrupulous companion.

"You must fight a man with his own we'pons, Deerslayer," cried Hurry, in his uncouth dialect, and in his dogmatical manner of disposing of all moral propositions; "if he's f'erce, you must be f'ercer; if he's stout of heart, you must be stouter. This is the way to get the better of Christian or savage: by keeping up to this trail, you'll gèt soonest to the ind of your journey."

"That 's not Moravian doctrine, which teaches that all are to be judged according to their talents, or l'arning; the Indian, like an Indian; and the white man, like a white man. Some of their teachers say, that if you 're struck on the cheek, it 's a duty to turn the other side of the face, and take another blow, instead of seeking revenge, whereby I understand——"

"That's enough!" shouted Hurry; "that 's all I want, to prove a man's doctrine! How long would it take to kick a man through the Colony—in at one ind, and out at the other, on that principle?"

"Don't mistake me, March," returned the young hunter with dignity; "I don't understand by this, any more, than that it 's *best* to

do this, if *possible*. Revenge is an Indian gift, and forgiveness a white-man's. That 's all. Overlook all you *can*, is what's meant; and not *revenge* all you can. As for kicking, Master Hurry," and Deerslayer's sun-burnt cheek flushed as he continued, "into the Colony or out of the Colony, that 's neither here nor there, seeing no one proposes it, and no one would be likely to put up with it. What I wish to say is, that a red-skin's scalping don't justify a pale-face's scalping."

"Do as you 're done by, Deerslayer; that's ever the Christian parson's doctrine."

"No, Hurry, I've asked the Moravians consarning that; and it 's altogether different. 'Do as you *would* be done by,' they tell me, is the *true* saying, while men practyse the *false*. They think all the Colonies wrong that offer bounties for scalps, and believe no blessing will follow the measures. Above all things, they forbid revenge."

"*That* for your Moravians!" cried March, snapping his fingers; "they 're the next thing to Quakers; and if you 'd believe all they tell you, not even a rat would be skinned out of marcy. Who ever heard of marcy on a musk-rat!"

The disdainful manner of Hurry prevented a reply, and he and the old man resumed the discussion of their plans in a more quiet and confidential manner. This conference lasted until Judith appeared, bearing the simple, but savoury supper. March observed, with a little surprise, that she placed the choicest bits before Deerslayer, and that in the little nameless attentions it was in her power to bestow, she quite obviously manifested a desire to let it be seen that she deemed him the honoured guest. Accustomed, however, to the wayward-ness and coquetry of the beauty, this discovery gave him little concern, and he ate with an appetite that was in no degree disturbed by any moral causes. The easily-digested food of the forests offering the fewest possible obstacles to the gratification of this great animal indulgence, Deerslayer, notwithstanding the hearty meal both had taken in the woods, was in no manner behind his companion in doing justice to the viands.

An hour later, the scene had greatly changed. The lake was still placid and glassy, but the gloom of the hour had succeeded to the soft twilight of a summer evening, and all within

the dark setting of the woods lay in the quiet repose of night. The forests gave up no song, or cry, or even murmur, but looked down from the hills on the lovely basin they encircled, in solemn stillness; and the only sound that was audible, was the regular dip of the sweeps, at which Hurry and Deerslayer lazily pushed, impelling the ark towards the castle. Hutter had withdrawn to the stern of the scow, in order to steer, but, finding that the young men kept even strokes, and held the desired course by their own skill, he had permitted the oar to drag in the water, taken a seat on the end of the vessel, and lighted his pipe. He had not been thus placed many minutes, ere Hetty came stealthily out of the cabin, or house, as they usually termed that part of the ark, and placed herself at his feet, on a little bench that she brought with her. As this movement was by no means unusual in his feeble-minded child, the old man paid no other attention to it, than to lay his hand kindly on her head, in an affectionate and approving manner; an act of grace that the girl received in meek silence.

After a pause of several minutes, Hetty be-

gan to sing. Her voice was low and tremulous, but it was earnest and solemn. The words and the time were of the simplest form, the first being a hymn that she had been taught by her mother, and the last, one of those natural melodies that find favour with all classes, in every age, coming from, and being addressed to, the feelings. Hutter never listened to this simple strain without finding his heart and manner softened; facts that his daughter well knew, and by which she had often profited, through the sort of holy instinct that enlightens the weak of mind, more especially in their aims toward good.

Hetty's low, sweet tones had not been raised many moments, when the dip of the oars ceased, and the holy strain arose singly on the breathing silence of the wilderness. As if she gathered courage with the theme, her powers appeared to increase as she proceeded; and though nothing vulgar, or noisy, mingled in her melody, its strength and melancholy tenderness grew on the ear, until the air was filled with this simple homage of a soul that seemed almost spotless. That the men forward were not indifferent to this touching interruption,

was proved by their inaction; nor did their oars again dip, until the last of the sweet sounds had actually died among the remarkable shores, which, at that witching hour, would waft, even the lowest modulations of the human voice, more than a mile. Hutter, himself, was affected; for, rude as he was by early habits, and even ruthless as he had got to be by long exposure to the practices of the wilderness, his nature was of that fearful mixture of good and evil, that so generally enters into the moral composition of man.

"You are sad to-night, child," said the father, whose manner and language usually assumed some of the gentleness and elevation of the civilized life he had led in youth, when he thus communed with this particular child; "we have just escaped from enemies, and ought rather to rejoice."

"You can never do it, father!" said Hetty, in a low remonstrating manner, taking his hard knotty hand into both her own; "you have talked long with Harry March; but neither of you will have the heart to do it!"

"This is going beyond your means, foolish child; you must have been naughty enough to

have listened, or you could know nothing of our talk."

"Why should you and Hurry kill people—especially women and children?"

"Peace, girl, peace; we are at war, and must do to our enemies as our enemies would do to us."

"That's not it, father! I heard Deerslayer say how it was. You must do to your enemies, as you *wish* your enemies would do to you. No man wishes his enemies to kill him."

"We kill our enemies in war, girl, lest they should kill us. One side or the other must begin; and them that begin first are most apt to get the victory. You know nothing about these things, poor Hetty, and had best say nothing."

"*Judith* says it is wrong, father; and Judith has sense though I have none."

"Jude understands better than to talk to me of these matters; for she has sense, as you say, and knows I'll not bear it. Which would you prefer, Hetty; to have your own scalp taken, and sold to the French, or that we should kill our enemies, and keep them from harming us?"

"That's not it, father! Don't kill them, nor let them kill us. Sell your skins, and get more, if you can; but don't sell blood."

"Come, come, child; let us talk of matters you understand. Are you glad to see our old friend, March, back again? You like Hurry, and must know that one day he may be your brother—if not something nearer."

"That can't be, father," returned the girl, after a considerable pause; "Hurry has had one father and one mother; and people never have two."

"So much for your weak mind, Hetty. When Jude marries, her husband's father will be her father, and her husband's sister, her sister. If she should marry Hurry, then he will be your brother."

"Judith will never have Hurry," returned the girl mildly, but positively; "Judith don't like Hurry."

"That's more than you can know, Hetty. Harry March is the handsomest, and the strongest, and the boldest young man that ever visits the lake; and, as Jude is the greatest beauty, I don't see why they shouldn't come together. He has as much as promised that he

will enter into this job with me on condition that I'll consent."

Hetty began to move her body back and forth, and otherwise to express mental agitation; but she made no answer for more than a minute. Her father, accustomed to her manner, and suspecting no immediate cause of concern, continued to smoke with the apparent phlegm which would seem to belong to that particular species of enjoyment.

"Hurry *is* handsome, father," said Hetty, with a simple emphasis, that she might have hesitated about using, had her mind been more alive to the inferences of others.

"I told you so, child," muttered old Hutter, without removing the pipe from between his teeth; "he's the likeliest youth in these parts; and Jude is the likeliest young woman I've met with since her poor mother was in her best days."

"Is it wicked to be ugly, father?"

"One might be guilty of worse things—but you're by no means ugly; though not so comely as Jude."

"Is Judith any happier for being so handsome?"

"She may be, child; and she may not be. But talk of other matters, now; for you hardly understand these, poor Hetty. How do you like our new acquaintance, Deerslayer?"

"He isn't handsome, father. Hurry is far handsomer than Deerslayer."

"That's true; but they say he is a noted hunter! His fame had reached me before I ever saw him; and I did hope he would prove to be as stout a warrior, as he is dexterous with the deer. All men are not alike, however, child; and it takes time, as I know by experience, to give a man a true wilderness heart."

"Have I got a wilderness heart, father—and, Hurry, is *his* heart true wilderness?"

"You sometimes ask queer questions, Hetty! Your heart is good, child, and fitter for the settlements than for the woods; while your reason is fitter for the woods than for the settlements."

"Why has Judith more reason than I, father?"

"Heaven help thee, child!—this is more than I can answer. God gives sense, and appearance, and all these things; and he grants

them as he seeth fit. Dost thou wish for more sense?"

"Not I. The little I have troubles me; for when I think the hardest, then I feel the unhappiest. I don't believe thinking is good for me, though I *do* wish I was as handsome as Judith!"

"Why so, poor child? Thy sister's beauty may cause her trouble, as it caused her mother before her. It's no advantage, Hetty, to be so marked for any thing as to become an object of envy, or to be sought after more than others."

"Mother was good, if she *was* handsome," returned the girl, the tears starting to her eyes, as usually happened when she adverted to her deceased parent.

Old Hutter, if not equally affected, was moody and silent at this allusion to his wife. He continued smoking, without appearing disposed to make any answer, until his simple-minded daughter repeated her remark, in a way to show that she felt uneasiness, lest he might be inclined to deny her assertion. Then he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and laying his hand in a sort of rough kindness on the girl's head, he made a reply.

"Thy mother was too good for this world," he said; "though others might not think so. Her good looks did not befriend her; and you have no occasion to mourn that you are not as much like her as your sister. Think less of beauty, child, and more of your duty, and you'll be as happy on this lake, as you could be in the king's palace."

"I know it, father; but Hurry says beauty is every thing in a young woman."

Hutter made an ejaculation expressive of dissatisfaction, and went forward; passing through the house in order to do so. Hetty's simple betrayal of her weakness in behalf of March, gave him uneasiness on a subject concerning which he had never felt before; and he determined to come to an explanation at once with his visitor; for directness of speech, and decision in conduct, were two of the best qualities of this rude being, in whom the seeds of a better education seemed to be constantly struggling upward, to be choked by the fruits of a life in which his hard struggles for subsistence and security had steeled his feelings, and indurated his nature. When he reached the forward end of the scow, he manifested an

intention to relieve Deerslayer at the oar, directing the latter to take his own place aft. By these changes, the old man and Hurry were again left alone, while the young hunter was transferred to the other end of the ark.

Hetty had disappeared when Deerslayer reached his new post, and for some little time he directed the course of the slow-moving craft by himself. It was not long, however, before Judith came out of the cabin, as if disposed to do the honours of the place to a stranger engaged in the service of her family. The starlight was sufficient to permit objects to be plainly distinguished when near at hand, and the bright eyes of the girl had an expression of kindness in them when they met those of the youth, that the latter was easily enabled to discover. Her rich hair shaded her spirited, and yet soft countenance, even at that hour rendering it the more beautiful—as the rose is loveliest when reposing amid the shadows and contrasts of its native foliage. Little ceremony is used in the intercourse of the woods; and Judith had acquired a readiness of address, by the admiration that she so generally excited, which, if it did not amount to forwardness

certainly in no degree lent to her charms the aid of that retiring modesty on which poets love to dwell.

"I thought I should have killed myself with laughing, Deerslayer," the beauty abruptly, but coquettishly commenced, "when I saw that Indian dive into the river! He was a good-looking savage, too," the girl always dwelt on personal beauty as a sort of merit, "and yet one couldn't stop to consider whether his paint would stand water!"

"And I thought they would have killed you with their we'pons, Judith," returned Deerslayer; "it was an awful risk for a female to run in the face of a dozen Mingos!"

"Did *that* make *you* come out of the cabin, in spite of their rifles, too?" asked the girl, with more real interest than she would have cared to betray, though with an indifference of manner that was the result of a good deal of practice, united to native readiness.

"Men ar'n't apt to see females in danger, and not come to their assistance. Even a Mingo knows that."

This sentiment was uttered with as much simplicity of manner as of feeling, and Judith

rewarded it with a smile so sweet, that even Deerslayer, who had imbibed a prejudice against the girl, in consequence of Hurry's suspicions of her levity, felt its charm, notwithstanding half its winning influence was lost in the feeble light. It at once created a sort of confidence between them, and the discourse was continued, on the part of the hunter, without the lively consciousness of the character of this coquette of the wilderness, with which it had certainly commenced.

"You are a man of deeds and not of words, I see plainly, Deerslayer," continued the beauty, taking her seat near the spot where the other stood, "and I foresee we shall be very good friends. Hurry Harry has a tongue, and, giant as he is, he talks more than he performs."

"March is your fri'nd, Judith; and fri'nds should be tender of each other, when apart."

"We all know what Hurry's friendship comes to! Let him have his own way in every thing, and he's the best fellow in the Colony; but, 'head him off,' as you say of the deer, and he is master of every thing near him, but himself. Hurry is no favourite of mine,

Deerslayer; and I dare say, if the truth was known, and his conversation about me repeated, it would be found that he thinks no better of me, than I own I do of him."

The latter part of this speech was not uttered without uneasiness. Had the girl's companion been more sophisticated, he might have observed the averted face, the manner in which the pretty little foot was agitated, and other signs that, for some unexplained reason, the opinions of March were not quite as much matter of indifference to her as she thought fit to pretend. Whether this was no more than the ordinary working of female vanity, feeling keenly even when it affected not to feel at all, or whether it proceeded from that deeply-seated consciousness of right and wrong, which God himself has implanted in our breasts that we may know good from evil, will be made more apparent to the reader as we proceed in the tale. Deerslayer felt embarrassed. He well remembered the cruel imputations left by March's distrust; and, while he did not wish to injure his associate's suit by exciting resentment against him, his tongue was one that literally knew no guile. To answer without

saying more or less than he wished, was consequently a delicate duty.

"March has his say of all things in natur', whether of fri'nd or foe," slowly and cautiously rejoined the hunter. "He's one of them that speak as they feel, while the tongue's a-going, and that 's sometimes different from what they 'd speak if they took time to consider. Give me a Delaware, Judith, for one that reflects and ruminates on his idees! Inmity has made 'em thoughtful, and a loose tongue is no ritcommend at their council fires."

"I dare say March's tongue goes free enough when it gets on the subject of Judith Hutter and her sister," said the girl, rousing herself as if in careless disdain. "Young women's good names are a pleasant matter of discourse with some that wouldn't dare to be so open-mouthed, if there was a brother in the way. Master March may find it pleasant to traduce us, but, sooner or later, he'll repent!"

"Nay, Judith, this is taking the matter up too much in 'arnest. Hurry has never whispered a syllable ag'in the good name of Hetty, to begin with—"

"I see how it is—I see how it is"—impe-

tuously interrupted Judith. "*I* am the one he sees fit to scorch with his withering tongue! —Hetty, indeed!—Poor Hetty!"—she continued, her voice sinking into low husky tones, that seemed nearly to stifle her in the utterance —"*she* is beyond, and above his slanderous malice! Poor Hetty! If God has created her feeble-minded, the weakness lies altogether on the side of errors of which she seems to know nothing. The earth never held a purer being than Hetty Hutter, Deerslayer."

"I can believe it—yes, I can believe *that*, Judith, and I hope 'arnestly that the same can be said of her handsome sister."

There was a soothing sincerity in the voice of Deerslayer which touched the girl's feelings; nor did the allusion to her beauty lessen the effect with one who only knew too well the power of her personal charms. Nevertheless, the still, small voice of conscience was not hushed, and it prompted the answer which she made, after giving herself time to reflect.

"I dare say Hurry had some of his vile hints about the people of the garrisons," she added. "He knows they are gentlemen, and can never forgive any one for being what he feels he can never become himself."

"Not in the sense of a king's officer, Judith, sartainly, for March has no turn that-a-way; but in the sense of reality, why may not a beaver-hunter be as respectable as a governor. Since you speak of it, yourself, I'll not deny that he *did* complain of one as humble as you, being so much in the company of scarlet coats and silken sashes. But 't was jealousy that brought it out of him, and I do think that he mourned over his own thoughts, as a mother would have mourned over her child."

Perhaps Deerslayer was not aware of the full meaning that his earnest language conveyed. It is certain that he did not see the colour that crimsoned the whole of Judith's fine face, nor detect the uncontrollable distress that, immediately after, changed its hue to a deadly paleness. A minute or two elapsed in profound stillness, the splash of the water seeming to occupy all the avenues of sound; and then Judith arose, and grasped the hand of the hunter, almost convulsively, with one of her own.

"Deerslayer," she said, hurriedly, "I'm glad the ice is broke between us. They say that sudden friendships lead to long enmities, but I do not believe it will turn out so with

us. I know not how it is—but, you are the first man I ever met, who did not seem to wish to flatter—to wish my ruin—to be an enemy in disguise—never mind; say nothing to Hurry, and another time we 'll talk together again."

As the girl released her grasp, she vanished in the house, leaving the astonished young man standing at the steering-oar as motionless as one of the pines on the hills. So abstracted indeed had his thoughts become, that he was hailed by Hutter to keep the scow's head in the right direction, before he remembered his actual situation.

CHAPTER VI.

"So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:"

MILTON.

SHORTLY after the disappearance of Judith, a light southerly air arose, and Hutter set a large square-sail, that had once been the flying top-sail of an Albany sloop, but which, having become threadbare in catching the breezes of Tappan, had been condemned and sold. He had a light tough spar of tamarack that he could raise on occasion, and with a little contrivance, his duck was spread to the wind in a sufficiently professional manner. The effect on the ark was such as to supersede the necessity of rowing; and, in about two hours, the castle was seen, in the darkness, rising out of the water, at the distance of a hundred yards.

The sail was then lowered, and by slow degrees the scow drifted up to the building, and was secured.

No one had visited the house since Hurry and his companion left it. The place was found in the quiet of midnight, a sort of type of the solitude of a wilderness. As an enemy was known to be near, Hutter directed his daughters to abstain from the use of lights, luxuries in which they seldom indulged during the warm months, lest they might prove beacons to direct their foes where they might be found.

"In open day-light, I shouldn't fear a host of savages behind these stout logs, and they without any cover to skulk into," added Hutter, when he had explained to his guests the reasons why he forbade the use of lights; "for I 've three or four trusty weapons always loaded, and Killdeer, in particular, is a piece that never misses. But it's a different thing at night. A canoe might get upon us unseen in the dark; and the savages have so many cunning ways of attacking, that I look upon it as bad enough to deal with 'em under a bright sun. I built this dwelling in order to have 'em at arm's length, in case we should ever get to blows again. Some people think it's too open

and exposed, but I'm for anchoring out here, clear of underbrush and thickets, as the surest means of making a safe berth."

"You was once a sailor, they tell me, old Tom?" said Hurry, in his abrupt manner, struck by one or two expressions that the other had just used; "and some people believe you could give us strange accounts of inimies and shipwrecks, if you'd a mind to come out with all you know?"

"There are people in this world, Hurry," returned the other evasively, "who live on other men's thoughts; and some such often find their way into the woods. What I 've been, or what I 've seen in youth, is of less matter, now, than what the savages are. It's of more account to find out what will happen in the next twenty-four hours than to talk over what happened twenty-four years since."

"That's judgment, Deerslayer; yes, that's sound judgment. Here's Judith and Hetty to take care of, to say nothing of our own top-knots; and, for my part, I can sleep as well in the dark, as I could under a noon-day sun. To me it's no great matter whether there is light or not, to see to shut my eyes by."

As Deerslayer seldom thought it necessary

to answer his companion's peculiar vein of humour, and Hutter was evidently indisposed to dwell longer on the subject, its discussion ceased with this remark. The latter had something more on his mind, however, than recollections. His daughters had no sooner left them, with an expressed intention of going to bed, than he invited his two companions to follow him again into the scow. Here the old man opened his project, keeping back the portion that he had reserved for execution by Hurry and himself.

"The great object for people, posted like ourselves, is to command the water," he commenced. "So long as there is no other craft on the lake, a bark canoe is as good as a man-of-war, since the castle will not be easily taken by swimming. Now, there are but five canoes remaining in these parts, two of which are mine, and one is Hurry's. These three we have with us, here; one being fastened in the canoe-dock beneath the house, and the other two being alongside the scow. The other canoes are housed on the shore, in hollow logs; and the savages, who are such venomous enemies, will leave no likely place unex-

amined, in the morning, if they 're serious in s'arch of bounties——"

"Now, friend Hutter," interrupted Hurry, "the Indian don't live that can find a canoe that is suitably wintered. I've done something at this business before now, and Deerslayer, here, knows that I am one that can hide a craft in such a way that I can't find it myself."

"Very true, Hurry," put in the person to whom the appeal had been made, "but you overlook the sarcumstance that if you couldn't see the trail of the man who did the job, *I could.* I 'm of Master Hutter's mind, that it 's far wiser to mistrust a savage's ingenuity, than to build any great expectations on his want of eye-sight. If these two canoes can be got off to the castle, therefore, the sooner it's done the better."

"Will you be of the party that 's to do it?" demanded Hutter, in a way to show that the proposal both surprised and pleased him.

"Sartain. I'm ready to enlist in any enterprise that 's not ag'in a white man's lawful gifts. Natur' orders us to defend our lives, and the lives of others, too, when there's

occasion and opportunity. I'll follow you, Floating Tom, into the Mingo camp on such an ar'r'n'd, and will strive to do my duty should we come to blows; though, never having been tried in battle, I don't like to promise more than I may be able to perform. We all know our wishes, but none know their might till put to the proof."

"That's modest and suitable, lad," exclaimed Hurry. "You've never yet heard the crack of an angry rifle; and, let me tell you, 'tis as different from the persuasion of one of your venison speeches, as the laugh of Judith Hutter in her best humour, is from the scolding of a Dutch housekeeper on the Mohawk. I don't expect you'll prove much of a warrior, Deerslayer, though your equal with the bucks and the does don't exist in all these parts. As for the ra'al sarvice, however, you'll turn out rather rearward, according to my consait."

"We'll see, Hurry, we'll see," returned the other meekly; so far as human eye could discover, not at all disturbed by these expressed doubts concerning his conduct on a point on which men are sensitive, precisely in

the degree that they feel the consciousness of demerit; "having never been tried, I 'll wait to know, before I form any opinion myself; and then there 'll be sartainty, instead of bragging. I 've heard of them that was valiant, afore the fight, who did little in it; and of them that waited to know their own tempers, and found that they weren't as bad as some expected when put to the proof."

"At any rate, we know you can use a paddle, young man," said Hutter, "and that 's all we shall ask of you, to-night. Let us waste no more time, but get into the canoe, and *do*, in place of talking."

As Hutter led the way, in the execution of his project, the boat was soon ready, with Hurry and Deerslayer at the paddles. Before the old man embarked, himself, however, he held a conference of several minutes with Judith, entering the house for that purpose; then, returning, he took his place in the canoe which left the side of the ark at the next instant.

Had there been a temple reared to God, in that solitary wilderness, its clock would have told the hour of midnight as the party set forth

on their expedition. The darkness had increased, though the night was still clear, and the light of the stars sufficed for all the purposes of the adventurers. Hutter alone knew the places where the two canoes were hid, and he directed the course while his two athletic companions raised and dipped their paddles with proper caution, lest the sounds should be carried to the ears of their enemies across that sheet of placid water in the stillness of deep night. But the bark was too light to require any extraordinary efforts, and skill supplying the place of strength, in about half an hour they were approaching the shore at a point near a league from the castle.

"Lay on your paddles, men," said Hutter, in a low voice, "and let us look about us for a moment. We must now be all eyes and ears, for these vermin have noses like blood-hounds."

The shores of the lake were examined closely, in order to discover any glimmering of light that might have been left in a camp; and the men strained their eyes, in the obscurity, to see if some thread of smoke was not still stealing along the mountain-side, as it arose

from the dying embers of a fire. Nothing unusual could be traced; and as the position was at some distance from the outlet, or the spot where the savages had been met, it was thought safe to land. The paddles were plied again, and the bows of the canoe ground upon the gravelly beach with a gentle motion, and a sound barely audible. Hutter and Hurry immediately landed, the former carrying his own and his friend's rifle, leaving Deerslayer in charge of the canoe. The hollow log lay a little distance up the side of the mountain, and the old man led the way towards it, using so much caution as to stop at every third or fourth step, to listen if any tread betrayed the presence of a foe. The same death-like stillness, however, reigned on the midnight scene, and the desired place was reached without an occurrence to induce alarm.

"This is it," whispered Hutter, laying a foot on the trunk of a fallen linden; "hand me the paddles first, and draw the boat out with care, for the wretches may have left it for a bait, after all.

"Keep my rifle handy, butt towards me, old fellow," answered March. "If they

attack me loaded, I shall want to unload the piece at 'em, at least. And feel if the pan is full."

"All 's right," muttered the other; "move slow, when you get your load, and let me lead the way."

The canoe was drawn out of the log with the utmost care, raised by Hurry to his shoulder, and the two began to return to the shore, moving but a step at a time, lest they should tumble down the steep declivity. The distance was not great, but the descent was extremely difficult; and, towards the end of their little journey, Deerslayer was obliged to land and meet them, in order to aid in lifting the canoe through the bushes. With his assistance, the task was successfully accomplished, and the light craft soon floated by the side of the other canoe. This was no sooner done, than all three turned anxiously toward the forest and the mountain, expecting an enemy to break out of the one, or to come rushing down the other. Still the silence was unbroken, and they all embarked with the caution that had been used in coming ashore.

Hutter now steered broad off towards the

centre of the lake. Having got a sufficient distance from the shore, he cast his prize loose, knowing that it would drift slowly up the lake, before the light southerly air, and intending to find it on his return. Thus relieved of his tow, the old man held his way down the lake, steering towards the very point where Hurry had made his fruitless attempt on the life of the deer. As the distance from this point to the outlet was less than a mile, it was like entering an enemy's country; and redoubled caution became necessary. They reached the extremity of the point, however, and landed in safety on the little gravelly beach already mentioned. Unlike the last place at which they had gone ashore, here was no acclivity to ascend, the mountains looming up in the darkness quite a quarter of a mile further west, leaving a margin of level ground between them and the strand. The point itself, though long, and covered with tall trees, was nearly flat, and, for some distance, only a few yards in width. Hutter and Hurry landed, as before, leaving their companion in charge of the boat.

In this instance, the dead tree that contained the canoe of which they had come in quest, lay

about half-way between the extremity of the narrow slip of land, and the place where it joined the main shore; and, knowing that there was water so near him on his left, the old man led the way along the eastern side of the belt, with some confidence, walking boldly, though still with caution. He had landed at the point expressly to get a glimpse into the bay, and to make certain that the coast was clear; otherwise he would have come ashore directly abreast of the hollow tree. There was no difficulty in finding the latter, from which the canoe was drawn, as before, and, instead of carrying it down to the place where Deerslayer lay, it was launched at the nearest favourable spot. As soon as it was in the water, Hurry entered it, and paddled round to the point, whither Hutter also proceeded, following the beach. As the three men had now in their possession all the boats on the lake, their confidence was greatly increased, and there was no longer the same feverish desire to quit the shore, or the same necessity for extreme caution. Their position on the extremity of the long, narrow bit of land, added to the feeling of security, as it permitted an enemy to approach in only one direc-

tion, that in their front, and under circumstances that would render discovery, with their habitual vigilance, almost certain. The three now landed together, and stood grouped in consultation on the gravelly point.

"We've fairly tree'd the scamps," said Hurry, chuckling at their success; "if they wish to visit the castle, let 'em wade or swim! Old Tom, that idee of your'n, in burrowing out in the lake, was high proof, and carries a fine bead. There be men who would think the land safer than the water; but, after all, reason shows it isn't; the beaver, and rats, and other l'arned creatur's taking to the last, when hard pressed. I call our position, now, entrenched, and set the Canadas at defiance."

"Let us paddle along this south shore," said Hutter, "and see if there's no sign of an encampment—but, first, let me have a better look into the bay, for no one has been far enough round the inner shore of the point to make sure of that quarter yet."

As Hutter ceased speaking, all three moved in the direction he had named. Scarce had they fairly opened the bottom of the bay, when a general start proved that their eyes had lighted

on a common object at the same instant. It was no more than a dying brand, giving out its flickering and failing light; but at that hour, and in that place, it was at once as conspicuous as "a good deed in a naughty world." There was not a shadow of doubt that this fire had been kindled at an encampment of the Indians. The situation, sheltered from observation on all sides but one, and even on that, except for a very short distance, proved that more care had been taken to conceal the spot, than would be used for ordinary purposes, and Hutter, who knew that a spring was near at hand, as well as one of the best fishing-stations on the lake, immediately inferred that this encampment contained the women and children of the party.

"That 's not a warrior's encampment," he growled to Hurry; "and there 's bounty enough sleeping round that fire to make a heavy division of head-money. Send the lad to the canoes, for there 'll come no good of him, in such an onset, and let us take the matter in hand, at once, like men."

"There 's judgment in your notion, old Tom, and I like it to the back-bone. Deerslayer, do

you get into the canoe, lad, and paddle off into the lake, with the spare one, and set it adrift, as we did with the other; after which, you can float along shore, as near as you can get to the head of the bay, keeping outside the point, howsever, and outside the rushes, too. You can hear us when we want you; and, if there 's any delay, I 'll call like a loon—yes, that 'll do it—the call of a loon shall be the signal. If you hear rifles, and feel like soldiering, why, you may close in, and see if you can make the same hand with the savages that you do with the deers."

"If my wishes could be followed, this matter would not be undertaken, Hurry—"

"Quite true—nobody denies it, boy; but your wishes *can't* be followed; and that inds the matter. So just canoe yourself off into the middle of the lake, and by the time you get back, there 'll be movements in that camp!"

The young man set about complying with great reluctance and a heavy heart. He knew the prejudices of the frontier-men too well, however, to attempt a remonstrance. The latter, indeed, under the circumstances, might prove dangerous, as it would certainly prove

useless. He paddled the canoe, therefore, silently, and with the former caution, to a spot near the centre of the placid sheet of water and set the boat just recovered adrift, to float towards the castle, before the light southerly air. This expedient had been adopted, in both cases, under the certainty that the drift could not carry the light barks more than a league or two, before the return of light, when they might easily be overtaken. In order to prevent any wandering savage from using them, by swimming off and getting possession, a possible, but scarcely a probable event, all the paddles were retained.

No sooner had he set the recovered canoe adrift, than Deerslayer turned the bows of his own towards the point on the shore that had been indicated by Hurry. So light was the movement of the little craft, and so steady the sweep of its master's arm, that ten minutes had not elapsed ere it was again approaching the land, having, in that brief time, passed over fully half a mile of distance. As soon as Deerslayer's eye caught a glimpse of the rushes, of which there were many growing in the water a hundred feet from the shore, he arrested the

motion of the canoe, and anchored his boat by holding fast to the delicate, but tenacious stem of one of the drooping plants. Here he remained, awaiting with an intensity of suspense that can be easily imagined, the result of the hazardous enterprise.

It would be difficult to convey to the minds of those who have never witnessed it, the sublimity that characterizes the silence of a solitude as deep as that which now reigned over the Glimmerglass. In the present instance, this sublimity was increased by the gloom of night, which threw its shadowy and fantastic forms around the lake, the forest, and the hills. It is not easy, indeed, to conceive any place more favourable to heighten these natural impressions, than that Deerslayer now occupied. The size of the lake brought all within the reach of human senses, while it displayed so much of the imposing scene at a single view, giving up, as it might be, at a glance, a sufficiency to produce the deepest impressions. As has been said, this was the first lake Deerslayer had ever seen. Hitherto, his experience had been limited to the courses of rivers and smaller streams, and never before

had he seen so much of that wilderness which he so well loved, spread before his gaze. Accustomed to the forest, however, his mind was capable of portraying all its hidden mysteries, as he looked upon its leafy surface. This was also the first time he had been on a trail where human lives depended on the issue. His ears had often drunk in the traditions of frontier warfare, but he had never yet been confronted with an enemy.

The reader will readily understand, therefore, how intense must have been the expectation of the young man as he sat in his solitary canoe, endeavouring to catch the smallest sound that might denote the course of things on shore. His training had been perfect, so far as theory could go, and his self-possession, notwithstanding the high excitement that was the fruit of novelty, would have done credit to a veteran. The visible evidences of the existence of the camp, or of the fire, could not be detected from the spot where the canoe lay, and he was compelled to depend on the sense of hearing alone. He did not feel impatient, for the lessons he had heard taught him the virtue of patience, and, most of all, inculcated

the necessity of wariness in conducting any covert assault on the Indians.. Once he thought he heard the cracking of a dried twig, but expectation was so intense it might mislead him. In this manner minute after minute passed, until the whole time since he left his companions was extended to quite an hour. Deerslayer knew not whether to rejoice in, or to mourn over this cautious delay, for, if it augured security to his associates, it foretold destruction to the feeble and innocent.

It might have been an hour and a half after his companions and he had parted, when Deerslayer was aroused by a sound that filled him equally with concern and surprise. The quavering call of a loon arose from the opposite side of the lake, evidently at no great distance from its outlet. There was no mistaking the note of this bird, which is so familiar to all who know the sounds of the American lakes. Shrill, tremulous, loud, and sufficiently prolonged, it seems the very cry of warning. It is often raised, also, at night—an exception to the habits of most of the other feathered inmates of the wilderness; a circumstance which had induced Hurry to select it as his own

signal. There had been sufficient time, certainly, for the two adventurers to make their way by land, from the point where they had been left to that whence the call had come, but it was not probable that they would adopt such a course. Had the camp been deserted, they would have summoned Deerslayer to the shore, and, did it prove to be peopled, there could be no sufficient motive for circling it, in order to re-embark at so great a distance. Should he obey the signal, and be drawn away from the landing, the lives of those who depended on him might be the forfeit—and, should he neglect the call, on the supposition that it had been really made, the consequences might be equally disastrous, though from a different cause. In this indecision he waited, trusting that the call, whether feigned or natural, would be speedily renewed. Nor was he mistaken. A very few minutes elapsed before the same shrill, warning cry was repeated, and from the same part of the lake. This time, being on the alert, his senses were not deceived. Although he had often heard admirable imitations of this bird, and was no mean adept, himself, in raising its notes, he felt satisfied that Hurry,

to whose efforts in that way he had attended, could never so completely and closely follow nature. He determined, therefore, to disregard that cry, and to wait for one less perfect and nearer at hand.

Deerslayer had hardly come to this determination, when the profound stillness of night and solitude was broken by a cry so startling, as to drive all recollection of the more melancholy call of the loon from the listener's mind. It was a shriek of agony, that came either from one of the female sex, or from a boy so young, as not yet to have attained a manly voice. This appeal could not be mistaken. Heart-rending terror—if not writhing agony—was in the sounds, and the anguish that had awakened them was as sudden as it was fearful. The young man released his hold of the rush, and dashed his paddle into the water; to do, he knew not what—to steer, he knew not whither. A very few moments, however, removed his indecision. The breaking of branches, the cracking of dried sticks, and the fall of feet, were all distinctly audible; the sounds appearing to approach the water, though in a direction that led diagonally towards the shore, and

a little farther north than the spot that Deerslayer had been ordered to keep near. Following this clue, the young man urged the canoe ahead, paying but little attention to the manner in which he might betray its presence. He had reached a part of the shore, where its immediate bank was tolerably high and quite steep. Men were evidently threshing through the bushes and trees on the summit of this bank, following the line of the shore, as if those who fled sought a favourable place for descending. Just at this instant, five or six rifles flashed, and the opposite hills gave back, as usual, the sharp reports in prolonged, rolling echoes. One or two shrieks, like those which escape the bravest when suddenly overcome by unexpected anguish and alarm, followed; and then the threshing among the bushes was renewed, in a way to show that man was grappling with man.

"Slippery devil!" shouted Hurry, with the fury of disappointment—"his skin 's greased! I shan't grapple!—Take *that* for your cunning!"

The words were followed by the fall of some heavy object among the smaller trees that

fringed the bank, appearing to Deerslayer as if his gigantic associate had hurled an enemy from him in this unceremonious manner. Again the flight and pursuit were renewed, and then the young man saw a human form break down the hill, and rush several yards into the water. At this critical moment the canoe was just near enough to the spot to allow this movement, which was accompanied by no little noise, to be seen; and feeling that there he must take in his companions, if anywhere, Deerslayer urged the canoe forward to the rescue. His paddle had not been raised twice, when the voice of Hurry was heard filling the air with imprecations, and he rolled on the narrow beach, literally loaded down with enemies. While prostrate, and almost smothered with his foes, the athletic frontier-man gave his loon-call, in a manner that would have excited laughter under circumstances less terrific. The figure in the water seemed suddenly to repent his own flight, and rushed to the shore to aid his companion, but was met and immediately overpowered by half a dozen fresh pursuers, who, just then, came leaping down the bank.

"Let up, you painted riptyles—let up!" cried Hurry, too hard pressed to be particular about the terms he used; "isn't it enough that I 'm withed like a saw-log, that ye must choke, too?"

This speech satisfied Deerslayer that his friends were prisoners, and that to land would be to share their fate. He was already within a hundred feet of the shore, when a few timely strokes of the paddle not only arrested his advance, but forced him off to six or eight times that distance from his enemies. Luckily for him, all of the Indians had dropped their rifles in the pursuit, or this retreat might not have been effected with impunity; though no one had noted the canoe in the first confusion of the *mêlée*.

"Keep off the land, lad!" called out Hutter; "the girls depend only on you, now: you will want all your caution to escape these savages. Keep off, and God prosper you, as you aid my children!"

There was little sympathy, in general, between Hutter and the young man, but the bodily and mental anguish with which this appeal was made, served at the moment to

conceal from the latter the former's faults. He saw only the father in his sufferings, and resolved at once to give a pledge of fidelity to his interests, and to be faithful to his word.

"Put your heart at ease, Master Hutter," he called out; "the gals shall be looked to, as well as the castle. The inimy has got the shore, 'tis no use to deny, but he hasn't got the water. Providence has the charge of all, and no one can say what will come of it; but, if good-will can sarve you and your'n, depend on that much. My exper'ence is small, but my will is good."

"Ay—ay, Deerslayer," returned Hurry, in his stentorian voice, which was losing some of its heartiness, notwithstanding—"Ay, ay, Deerslayer, you *mean* well enough, but what can you *do?* You 're no great matter in the best of times, and such a person is not likely to turn out a miracle in the worst. If there's one savage on this lake shore, there's forty, and that's an army you ar'n't the man to overcome. The best way, in my judgment, will be to make a straight course to the castle; get the gals into the canoe, with a few eatables; then strike off for the corner of the lake where we

came in, and take the best trail for the Mohawk. These devils won't know where to look for you for some hours, and if they did, and went off hot in the pursuit, they must turn either the foot, or the head of the lake, to get at you. That's my judgment in the matter; and if old Tom, here, wishes to make his last will and testament in a manner favourable to his darters, he'll say the same."

"'T will never do, young man," rejoined Hutter. "The enemy has scouts out at this moment, looking for canoes, and you'll be seen and taken. Trust to the castle; and, above all things, keep clear of the land. Hold out a week, and parties from the garrisons will drive the savages off."

"'T wont be four-and-twenty hours, old fellow, afore these foxes will be rafting off, to storm your castle," interrupted Hurry, with more of the heat of argument than might be expected from a man who was bound and a captive, and about whom nothing could be called free but his opinions and his tongue. "Your advice has a stout sound, but it will have a fatal tarmination. If you or I was in the house, we might hold out a few days, but

remember that this lad has never seen an inimy afore to-night, and is what you yourself called settlement-conscienced; though, for my part, I think the consciences in the settlements pretty much the same as they are out here in the woods. These savages are making signs, Deerslayer, for me to encourage you to come ashore with the canoe; but that I'll never do, as it's ag'in reason and natur'. As for old Tom, and myself, whether they'll scalp us to-night, keep us for the torture by fire, or carry us to Canada, is more than any one knows, but the devil that advises them how to act. I've such a big and bushy head, that it 's quite likely they 'll indivor to get two scalps off it, for the bounty is a tempting thing, or old Tom and I wouldn't be in this scrape. Ay—there they go with their signs, ag'in, but if I advise you to land, may they eat me as well as roast me. No, no, Deerslayer—do you keep off where you are, and after day-light, on no account come within two hundred yards—"

This injunction of Hurry's was stopped by a hand being rudely slapped against his mouth, the certain sign that some one in the party sufficiently understood English to have at

length detected the drift of his discourse. Immediately after, the whole group entered the forest, Hutter and Hurry apparently making no resistance to the movement. Just as the sounds of the cracking bushes were ceasing, however, the voice of the father was again heard.

"As you 're true to my children, God prosper you, young man!" were the words that reached Deerslayer's ears; after which he found himself left to follow the dictates of his own discretion.

Several minutes elapsed, in death-like stillness, when the party on the shore had disappeared in the woods. Owing to the distance, rather more than two hundred yards and the obscurity, Deerslayer had been able barely to distinguish the group, and to see it retiring; but even this dim connexion with human forms, gave an animation to the scene that was strongly in contrast to the absolute solitude that remained. Although the young man leaned forward to listen, holding his breath and condensing every faculty in the single sense of hearing, not another sound reached his ears to denote the vicinity of human beings. It seemed as if a silence that had never been broken reigned on the spot again; and, for an

instant, even that piercing shriek which had so lately broken the stillness of the forest, or the execrations of March, would have been a relief to the feeling of desertion to which it gave rise.

This paralysis of mind and body, however, could not last long in one constituted mentally and physically like Deerslayer. Dropping his paddle into the water, he turned the head of the canoe, and proceeded slowly, as one walks who thinks intently, towards the centre of the lake. When he believed himself to have reached a point in a line with that where he had set the last canoe adrift, he changed his direction northward, keeping the light air as nearly on his back as possible. After paddling a quarter of a mile in this direction, a dark object became visible on the lake, a little to the right; and turning on one side for the purpose, he had soon secured his lost prize to his own boat. Deerslayer now examined the heavens, the course of the air, and the position of the two canoes. Finding nothing in either to induce a change of plan, he lay down and prepared to 'catch a few hours' sleep, that the morrow might find him equal to its exigencies.

Although the hardy and the tired sleep pro-

foundly, even in scenes of danger, it was some time before Deerslayer lost his recollection. His mind dwelt on what had passed, and his half-conscious faculties kept figuring the events of the night in a sort of waking dream. Suddenly he was up and alert, for he fancied he heard the preconcerted signal of Hurry, summoning him to the shore. But all was still as the grave, again. The canoes were slowly drifting northward, the thoughtful stars were glimmering in their mild glory over his head, and the forest-bound sheet of water lay embedded between its mountains, as calm and melancholy as if never troubled by the winds, or brightened by a noon-day sun. Once more the loon raised his tremulous cry, near the foot of the lake, and the mystery of the alarm was explained. Deerslayer adjusted his hard pillow, stretched his form in the bottom of the canoe, and slept.

CHAPTER VII.

"Clear, placid Leman! Thy contrasted lake
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction: once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved."

BYRON.

Day had fairly dawned, before the young man, whom we have left in the situation described in the last chapter, again opened his eyes. This was no sooner done, than he started up, and looked about him with the eagerness of one who suddenly felt the importance of accurately ascertaining his precise position. His rest had been deep and undisturbed; and when

he awoke, it was with a clearness of intellect, and a readiness of resources that were much needed at that particular moment. The sun had not risen, it is true, but the vault of heaven was rich with the winning softness that 'brings and shuts the day,' while the whole air was filled with the carols of birds, the hymns of the feathered tribe. These sounds first told Deerslayer the risks he ran. The air, for wind it could scarce be called, was still light; it is true, but it had increased a little in the course of the night, and as the canoes were mere feathers on the water, they had drifted twice the expected distance; and, what was still more dangerous, had approached so near the base of the mountain that here rose precipitously from the eastern shore, as to render the carols of the birds plainly audible. This was not the worst. The third canoe had taken the same direction, and was slowly drifting towards a point where it must inevitably touch, unless turned aside by a shift of wind, or human hands. In other respects, nothing presented itself to attract attention, or to awaken alarm. The castle stood on its shoal, nearly abreast of the canoes, for the drifts had amounted to miles in the course

of the night, and the ark lay fastened to its piles, as both had been left so many hours before.

As a matter of course, Deerslayer's attention was first given to the canoe ahead. It was already quite near the point, and a very few strokes of the paddle sufficed to tell him that it must touch before he could possibly overtake it. Just at this moment, too, the wind inopportunely freshened, rendering the drift of the light craft much more rapid and certain. Feeling the impossibility of preventing a contact with the land, the young man wisely determined not to heat himself with unnecessary exertions; but, first looking to the priming of his piece, he proceeded slowly and warily towards the point, taking care to make a little circuit, that he might be exposed on only one side as he approached.

The canoe adrift, being directed by no such intelligence, pursued its proper way, and grounded on a small sunken rock at the distance of three or four yards from the shore. Just at that moment, Deerslayer had got abreast of the point, and turned the bows of his own boat to the land; first casting loose his tow, that his movements

might be unencumbered. The canoe hung an instant on the rock; then it rose a hair's-breadth on an almost imperceptible swell of the water, swung round, floated clear, and reached the strand. All this the young man noted, but it neither quickened his pulses, nor hastened his hand. If any one had been lying in wait for the arrival of the waif, he must be seen, and the utmost caution in approaching the shore became indispensable; if no one was in ambush, hurry was unnecessary. The point being nearly diagonally opposite to the Indian encampment, he hoped the last, though the former was not only possible, but probable; for the savages were prompt in adopting all the expedients of their particular modes of warfare, and quite likely had many scouts searching the shores for craft to carry them off to the castle. As a glance at the lake from any height or projection, would expose the smallest object on its surface, there was little hope that either of the canoes could pass unseen; and Indian sagacity needed no instruction to tell which way a boat or a log would drift, when the direction of the wind was known. As Deerslayer drew nearer and nearer to the land, the stroke of his paddle

grew slower, his eye became more watchful, and his ears and nostrils almost dilated with the effort to detect any lurking danger. 'Twas a trying moment for a novice, nor was there the encouragement which even the timid sometimes feel, when conscious of being observed and commended. He was entirely alone, thrown on his own resources, and was cheered by no friendly eye, emboldened by no encouraging voice. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, the most experienced veteran in forest warfare could not have conducted better. Equally free from recklessness and hesitation, his advance was marked by a sort of philosophical prudence, that appeared to render him superior to all motives but those which were best calculated to effect his purpose. Such was the commencement of a career in forest exploits, that afterwards rendered this man, in his way, and under the limits of his habits and opportunities, as renowned as many a hero whose name has adorned the pages of works more celebrated than legends simple as ours can ever become.

When about a hundred yards from the shore Deerslayer rose in the canoe, gave three or four

vigorous strokes with the paddle, sufficient of themselves to impel the bark to land, and then quickly laying aside the instrument of labour, he seized that of war. He was in the very act of raising the rifle, when a sharp report was followed by the buzz of a bullet that passed so near his body, as to cause him involuntarily to start. The next instant, Deerslayer staggered, and fell his whole length in the bottom of the canoe. A yell—it came from a single voice—followed, and an Indian leaped from the bushes upon the open area of the point bounding towards the canoe. This was the moment the young man desired. He rose on the instant, and levelled his own rifle at his uncovered foe; but his finger hesitated about pulling the trigger on one whom he held at such a disadvantage. This little delay, probably, saved the life of the Indian, who bounded back into the cover as swiftly as he had broken out of it. In the meantime, Deerslayer had been swiftly approaching the land, and his own canoe reached the point just as his enemy disappeared. As its movements had not been directed, it touched the shore a few yards from the other boat; and though the rifle of his foe had to be loaded, there was not time to secure his prize, and to

carry it beyond danger, before he would be exposed to another shot. Under the circumstances, therefore, he did not pause an instant, but dashed into the woods and sought a cover.

On the immediate point there was a small open area, partly in native grass, and partly beach, but a dense fringe of bushes lined its upper side. This narrow belt of dwarf vegetation passed, one issued immediately into the high and gloomy vaults of the forest. The land was tolerably level for a few hundred feet, and then it rose precipitously in a mountain side. The trees were tall, large, and so free from under-brush, that they resembled vast columns, irregularly scattered, upholding a dome of leaves. Although they stood tolerably close together, for their ages and size, the eye could penetrate to considerable distances; and bodies of men, even, might have engaged beneath their cover with concert and intelligence.

Deerslayer knew that his adversary must be employed in re-loading, unless he had fled. The former proved to be the case, for the young man had no sooner placed himself behind a tree, than he caught a glimpse of the arm of the Indian, his body being concealed by an oak, in the very act of forcing the

leathered bullet home. Nothing would have been easier than to spring forward, and decide the affair by a close assault on his unprepared foe; but every feeling of Deerslayer revolted at such a step, although his own life had just been attempted from a cover. He was yet unpractised in the ruthless expedients of savage warfare, of which he knew nothing except by tradition and theory, and it struck him as an unfair advantage to assail an unarmed foe. His colour had heightened, his eye frowned, his lips were compressed, and all his energies were collected and ready; but instead of advancing to fire, he dropped his rifle to the usual position of a sportsman in readiness to catch his aim, and muttered to himself, unconscious that he was speaking—

"No, no—that may be red-skin warfare, but it's not a Christian's gifts. Let the miscreant charge, and then we'll take it out like men; for the canoe he *must* not, and *shall* not have. No; no; let him have time to load, and God will take care of the right!"

All this time the Indian had been so intent on his own movements, that he was even ignorant that his enemy was in the wood. His only apprehension was, that the canoe would

be recovered and carried away, before he might be in readiness to prevent it. He had sought the cover from habit, but was within a few feet of the fringe of bushes, and could be at the margin of the forest, in readiness to fire, in a moment. The distance between him and his enemy was about fifty yards, and the trees were so arranged by nature that the line of sight was not interrupted, except by the particular trees behind which each party stood.

His rifle was no sooner loaded, than the savage glanced around him, and advanced incautiously as regarded the real, but stealthily as respected the fancied position of his enemy, until he was fairly exposed. Then Deerslayer stepped from behind his own cover, and hailed him.

"This-a-way, red-skin; this-a-way, if you 're looking for me," he called out. "I 'm young in war, but not so young as to stand on an open beach to be shot down like an owl, by daylight. It rests on yourself whether it's peace, or war, atween us; for my gifts are white gifts, and I'm not one of them that thinks it valiant to slay human mortals, singly, in the woods."

The savage was a good deal startled by this

sudden discovery of the danger he ran. He had a little knowledge of English, however, and caught the drift of the other's meaning. He was also too well schooled to betray alarm, but, dropping the butt of his rifle to the earth, with an air of confidence, he made a gesture of lofty courtesy. All this was done with the ease and self-possession of one accustomed to consider no man his superior. In the midst of this consummate acting, however, the volcano that raged within caused his eyes to glare, and his nostrils to dilate, like those of some wild beast that is suddenly prevented from taking the fatal leap.

"Two canoe," he said, in the deep guttural tones of his race, holding up the number of fingers he mentioned, by way of preventing mistakes; "one for you—one for me."

"No, no, Mingo, that will never do. You own neither; and neither shall you have, as long as I can prevent it. I know it's war atween your people and mine, but that's no reason why human mortals should slay each other, like savage creatur's that meet in the woods; go your way, then, and leave me to go mine. The world is large enough for us

both; and when we meet fairly in battle, why the Lord will order the fate of each of us."

"Good!" exclaimed the Indian; "my brother missionary—great talk; all about Manitou."

"Not so—not so, warrior. I'm not good enough for the Moravians, and am too good for most of the other vagabonds that preach about in the woods. No, no, I'm only a hunter, as yet, though afore the peace is made, 'tis like enough there'll be occasion to strike a blow at some of your people. Still, I wish it to be done in fair fight, and not in a quarrel about the ownership of a miserable canoe."

"Good! My brother very young—but he very wise. Little warrior—great talker. Chief, sometimes, in council."

"I don't know this, nor do I say it, Indian," returned Deerslayer, colouring a little at the ill-concealed sarcasm of the other's manner; "I look forward to a life in the woods, and I only hope it may be a peaceable one. All young men must go on the war path when there's occasion, but war isn't needfully massacre. I've seen enough of the last, this very night, to know that Providence frowns on it; and I

now invite you to go your own way, while I go mine; and hope that we may part fri'nds."

"Good! My brother has two scalp—grey hair under t'other. Old wisdom—young tongue."

Here the savage advanced with confidence, his hand extended, his face smiling, and his whole bearing denoting amity and respect. Deerslayer met his offered friendship in a proper spirit, and they shook hands cordially, each endeavouring to assure the other of his sincerity and desire to be at peace.

"All have his own," said the Indian; "my canoe, mine; your canoe, your'n. Go look: if your'n, you keep; if mine, I keep."

"That's just, red-skin; though you must be wrong in thinking the canoe your property. Howsever, seein' is believin', and we'll go down to the shore, where you may look with your own eyes; for it's likely you'll object to trustin' altogether to mine."

The Indian uttered his favourite exclamation of "good!" and then they walked side by side, towards the shore. There was no apparent distrust in the manner of either, the Indian moving in advance, as if he wished to show his companion that he did not fear turning his back

to him. As they reached the open ground, the former pointed towards Deerslayer's boat, and said emphatically—

"No mine—pale face canoe. *This* red man's. No want other man's canoe—want his own."

"You 're wrong, red-skin, you 're altogether wrong. This canoe was left in old Hutter's keeping and is his'n, according to all law, red or white, till its owner comes to claim it. Here's the seats and the stitching of the bark to speak for themselves. No man ever know'd an Indian to turn off such work.

"Good! My brother little old—big wisdom. Indian no make him. White man's work."

"I'm glad you think so, for holding out to the contrary might have made ill blood atween us; every one having a right to take possession of his own. I'll just shove the canoe out of reach of dispute, at once, as the quickest way of settling difficulties."

While Deerslayer was speaking, he put a foot at the end of the light boat, and giving a vigorous shove, he sent it out into the lake a hundred feet or more, where, taking the true current, it would necessarily float past the

point, and be in no further danger of coming ashore. The savage started at this ready and decided expedient, and his companion saw that he cast a hurried and fierce glance at his own canoe, or that which contained the paddles. The change of manner, however, was but momentary, and then the Iroquois resumed his air of friendliness, and a smile of satisfaction.

"Good!" he repeated, with stronger emphasis than ever. "Young head, old mind. Know how to settle quarrel. Farewell, brother. He go to house in water—muskrat house—Indian go to camp; tell chiefs no find canoe."

Deerslayer was not sorry to hear this proposal, for he felt anxious to join the females, and he took the offered hand of the Indian very willingly. The parting words were friendly; and, while the red man walked calmly towards the wood, with the rifle in the hollow of his arm, without once looking back in uneasiness or distrust, the white man moved towards the remaining canoe, carrying his piece in the same pacific manner, it is true, but keeping his eyes fastened on the movements of the other. This distrust, however, seemed to be altogether uncalled for, and, as if ashamed to have entertained it, the young man averted his look, and

stepped carelessly up to his boat. Here he began to push the canoe from the shore, and to make his other preparations for departing. He might have been thus employed a minute, when, happening to turn his face towards the land, his quick and certain eye told him, at a glance, the imminent jeopardy in which his life was placed. The black, ferocious eyes of the savage were glancing on him, like those of the crouching tiger, through a small opening in the bushes, and the muzzle of his rifle seemed already to be opening in a line with his own body.

Then, indeed, the long practice of Deerslayer, as a hunter, did him good service. Accustomed to fire with the deer on the bound, and often when the precise position of the animal's body had in a manner to be guessed at, he used the same expedients here. To cock and poise his rifle were the acts of a single moment, and a single 'motion'; then, aiming almost without sighting, he fired into the bushes where he knew a body ought to be, in order to sustain the appalling countenance, which alone was visible. There was not time to raise the piece any higher, or to take a more deliberate aim. So rapid were his movements,

that both parties discharged their pieces at the same instant, the concussions mingling in one report. The mountains, indeed, gave back but a single echo. Deerslayer dropped his piece, and stood, with head erect, steady as one of the pines in the calm of a June morning, watching the result; while the savage gave the yell that has become historical for its appalling influence, leaped through the bushes, and came bounding across the open ground, flourishing a tomahawk. Still Deerslayer moved not, but stood with his unloaded rifle fallen against his shoulders, while, with a hunter's habits, his hands were mechanically feeling for the powder horn and charger. When about forty feet from his enemy, the savage hurled his keen weapon; but it was with an eye so vacant, and a hand so unsteady and feeble, that the young man caught it by the handle, as it was flying past him. At that instant, the Indian staggered and fell his whole length on the ground.

"I know'd it—I know'd it!" exclaimed Deerslayer, who was already preparing to force a fresh bullet into his rifle; "I know'd it must come to this, as soon as I had got the range from the creatur's eyes. A man sights sud-

denly, and fires quick, when his own life's in danger; yes, I know'd it would come to this. I was about the hundredth part of a second too quick for him, or it might have been bad for me! The riptyle's bullet has just grazed my side—but, say what you will, for or ag'in 'em, a red skin is by no means as sartain with powder and ball as a white man. Their gifts don't seem to lie that-a-way. Even Chingachgook, great as he is in other matters, isn't downright deadly with the rifle."

By this time the piece was reloaded, and Deerslayer, after tossing the tomahawk into the canoe, advanced to his victim, and stood over him, leaning on his rifle, in melancholy attention. It was the first instance in which he had seen a man fall in battle—it was the first fellow creature against whom he had ever seriously raised his own hand. The sensations were novel; and regret, with the freshness of our better feelings, mingled with his triumph. The Indian was not dead, though shot directly through the body. He lay on his back motionless, but his eyes, now full of consciousness, watched each action of his victor—as the fallen bird regards the fowler—jealous of every movement. The man probably expected the fatal

blow, which was to precede the loss of his scalp; or, perhaps, he anticipated that this latter act of cruelty would precede his death. Deerslayer read his thoughts; and he found a melancholy satisfaction in relieving the apprehensions of the helpless savage.

"No, no, red-skin," he said; "you 've nothing more to fear from me. I am of a Christian stock, and scalping is not of my gifts. I 'll just make sartain of your rifle, and then come back and do you what sarvice I can. Though here I can't stay much longer, as the crack of three rifles will be apt to bring some of your devils down upon me."

The close of this was said in a sort of a soliloquy, as the young man went in quest of the fallen rifle. The piece was found where its owner had dropped it, and was immediately put into the canoe. Laying his own rifle at its side, Deerslayer then returned and stood over the Indian again.

"All inmity atween you and me 's at an ind, red-skin," he said; "and you may set your heart at rest on the score of the scalp, or any further injury. My gifts are white, as I 've told you; and I hope my conduct will be white also!"

Could looks have conveyed all they meant, it is probable Deerslayer's innocent vanity, on the subject of colour, would have been rebuked a little; but he comprehended the gratitude that was expressed in the eyes of the dying savage, without in the least detecting the bitter sarcasm that struggled with the better feeling.

"Water!" ejaculated the thirsty and unfortunate creature; "give poor Indian water."

"Ay, water you shall have, if you drink the lake dry. I 'll just carry you down to it, that you may take your fill. This is the way, they tell me, with all wounded people—water is their greatest comfort and delight."

So saying, Deerslayer raised the Indian in his arms, and carried him to the lake. Here he first helped him to take an attitude in which he could appease his burning thirst; after which he seated himself on a stone, and took the head of his wounded adversary in his own lap, and endeavoured to soothe his anguish, in the best manner he could.

"It would be sinful in me to tell you your time hadn't come, warrior," he commenced, "and, therefore, I'll not say it. You 've passed the middle age already, and, considerin' the sort of lives ye lead, your days have been pretty

well filled. The principal thing, now, is to look forward to what comes next. Neither red-skin nor pale-face, on the whole, calculates much on sleepin' for ever; but both expect to live in another world. Each has his gifts, and will be judged by 'em, and, I suppose, you 've thought these matters over enough, not to stand in need of sarmons, when the trial comes. You 'll find your happy hunting-grounds if you 've been a just Indian; if an unjust, you'll meet your desarts in another way. I 've my own idees about these things; but you 're too old and exper'enced to need any explanations from one as young as I."

"Good!" ejaculated the Indian, whose voice retained its depth even as life ebbed away; "young head—old wisdom!"

"It 's sometimes a consolation, when the ind comes, to know that them we 've harmed, or *tried* to harm, forgive us. I suppose natur' seeks this relief by way of getting a pardon on 'arth; as we never can know whether He pardons, who is all in all, till judgment itself comes. It 's soothing to know that *any* pardon, at such times; and that, I conclude, is the secret. Now, as for myself, I overlook altogether your designs ag'in my life; first, because

no harm came of 'em; next, because it's your gifts, and natur', and trainin', and I ought not to have trusted you at all; and finally and chiefly, because I can bear no ill-will to a dying man, whether heathen or Christian. So put your heart at ease, so far as I'm consarned; you know best what other matters ought to trouble you, or what ought to give you satisfaction, in so trying a moment."

It is probable that the Indian had some of the fearful glimpses of the unknown state of being which God, in mercy, seems, at times, to afford to all the human race; but they were necessarily in conformity with his habits and prejudices. Like most of his people, and like too many of our own, he thought more of dying in a way to gain applause among those he left, than to secure a better state of existence hereafter. While Deerslayer was speaking, his mind was a little bewildered, though he felt that the intention was good; and when he had done, a regret passed over his spirit that none of his own tribe were present to witness his stoicism, under extreme bodily suffering, and the firmness with which he met his end. With the high innate courtesy that so often distinguishes the Indian warrior, before he becomes

corrupted by too much intercourse with the worst class of the white men, he endeavoured to express his thankfulness for the other's good intentions, and to let him understand that they were appreciated.

"Good!" he repeated, for this was an English word much used by the savages—"good—young head; young *heart*, too. *Old* heart tough; no shed tear. Hear Indian when he die, and no want to lie—what he call him?"

"Deerslayer is the name I bear now, though the Delawares have said that when I get back from this war-path I shall have a more manly title, provided I can 'arn one."

"That good name for boy—poor name for warrior. He get better quick. No fear *there*"—the savage had strength sufficient, under the strong excitement he felt, to raise a hand and tap the young man on his breast—"eye sartain—finger lightening—aim, death—great warrior, soon. No Deerslayer—Hawkeye—Hawkeye—Hawkeye. Shake hand."

Deerslayer—or Hawkeye, as the youth was then first named, for in after years he bore the appellation throughout all that region—Deerslayer took the hand of the savage, whose

last breath was drawn in that attitude, gazing in admiration at the countenance of a stranger, who had shown so much readiness, skill and firmness, in a scene that was equally trying and novel. When the reader remembers it is the highest gratification an Indian can receive to see his enemy betray weakness, he will be better able to appreciate the conduct which had extorted so great a concession at such a moment.

"His spirit has fled!" said Deerslayer in a suppressed, melancholy voice. "Ah's me!—Well, to this we must all come, sooner or later; and he is happiest, let his skin be of what colour it may, who is best fitted to meet it. Here lies the body of, no doubt, a brave warrior, and the soul is already flying towards its heaven, or hell, whether that be a happy hunting-ground, a place scant of game; regions of glory, according to Moravian doctrine, or flames of fire! So it happens, too, as regards other matters! Here have old Hutter, and Hurry Harry got themselves into difficulty, if they havn't got themselves into torment and death, and all for a bounty that luck offers to me in what many would think a lawful and suitable

manner. But not a farthing of such money shall cross my hand. White I was born, and white will I die; clinging to colour to the last, even though the King's Majesty, his governors, and all his councils, both at home and in the Colonies, forget from what they come, and where they hope to go, and all for a little advantage in warfare. No, no—warrior; hand of mine shall never molest your scalp, and so your soul may rest in peace on the p'int of making a decent appearance, when the body comes to join it, in your own land of spirits."

Deerslayer arose as soon as he had spoken. Then he placed the body of the dead man, in a sitting posture, with its back against the little rock, taking the necessary care to prevent it from falling, or in any way settling into an attitude that might be thought unseemly by the sensitive, though wild notions of a savage. When this duty was performed, the young man stood gazing at the grim countenance of his fallen foe in a sort of melancholy abstraction. As was his practice, however, a habit gained by living so much alone in the forest, he then began again to give utterance to his thoughts and feelings aloud.

"I didn't wish your life, red-skin," he said, "but you left me no choice atween killing, or being killed. Each party acted according to his gifts, I suppose, and blame can light on neither. You were treacherous, according to your natur' in war, and I was a little oversightful, as I'm apt to be in trusting others. Well, this is my first battle with a human mortal, though it's not likely to be the last. I have fou't most of the creatur's of the forest, such as bears, wolves, painters and catamounts, but this is the beginning with the red-skins. If I was Indian born, now, I might tell of this, or carry in the scalp, and boast of the expl'ite afore the whole tribe; or, if my inimy had only been even a bear, 't would have been nat'ral and proper to let every body know what had happened; but I don't well see how I'm to let even Chingachgook into this secret, so long as it can be done only by boasting with a white tongue. And why should I wish to boast of it, after all? It's slaying a human, although he was a savage; and how do I know that he was a just Indian; and that he has not been taken away suddenly to any thing but happy hunting-grounds. When it's onsartain whether good

or evil has been done, the wisest way is not to be boastful—still, I *should* like Chingachgook to know that I haven't discredited the Delawares, or my training!"

Part of this was uttered aloud, while part was merely muttered between the speaker's teeth; his more confident opinions enjoying the first advantage, while his doubts were expressed in the latter mode. Soliloquy and reflection received a startling interruption, however, by the sudden appearance of a second Indian on the lake shore, a few hundred yards from the point. This man, evidently another scout, who had probably been drawn to the place by the reports of the rifles, broke out of the forest with so little caution, that Deerslayer caught a view of his person before he was himself discovered. When the latter event did occur, as was the case a moment later, the savage gave a loud yell, which was answered by a dozen voices from different parts of the mountain-side. There was no longer any time for delay, and in another minute the boat was quitting the shore under long and steady sweeps of the paddle.

As soon as Deerslayer believed himself to

be at a safe distance, he ceased his efforts, permitting the little bark to drift, while he leisurely took a survey of the state of things. The canoe first sent adrift was floating before the air, quite a quarter of a mile above him, and a little nearer to the shore than he wished, now that he knew more of the savages were near at hand. The canoe shoved from the point was within a few yards of him, he having directed his own course towards it on quitting the land. The dead Indian lay in grim quiet where he had left him, the warrior who had shown himself from the forest had already vanished, and the woods themselves were as silent, and seemingly as deserted, as the day they came fresh from the hands of their great Creator. This profound stillness, however, lasted but a moment. When time had been given to the scouts of the enemy to reconnoitre, they burst out of the thicket upon the naked point, filling the air with yells of fury, at discovering the death of their companion. These cries were immediately succeeded by shouts of delight, when they reached the body, and clustered eagerly around it. Deerslayer was a sufficient adept in the usages of the natives,

to understand the reason of the change. The yell was the customary lamentation at the loss of a warrior, the shout a sign of rejoicing that the conqueror had not been able to secure the scalp; the trophy, without which a victory was never considered complete. The distance at which the canoes lay, probably prevented any attempts to injure the conqueror, the American Indian, like the panther of his own woods, seldom making any effort against his foe, unless tolerably certain it is under circumstances that may be expected to prove effective.

As the young man had no longer any motive to remain near the point, he prepared to collect his canoes, in order to tow them off to the castle. That nearest was soon in tow, when he proceeded in quest of the other, which was, all this time, floating up the lake. The eye of Deerslayer was no sooner fastened on this last boat, than it struck him that it was nearer to the shore than it would have been, had it merely followed the course of the gentle current of air. He began to suspect the influence of some unseen current in the water, and he quickened his exertions, in order to regain pos

session of it before it could drift into a dangerous proximity to the woods. On getting nearer, he thought that the canoe had a perceptible motion through the water, and, as it lay broadside to the air, that this motion was taking it towards the land. A few vigorous strokes of the paddle carried him still nearer, when the mystery was explained. Something was evidently in motion on the off-side of the canoe, or that which was furthest from himself, and closer scrutiny showed that it was a naked human arm. An Indian was lying in the bottom of the canoe, and was propelling it slowly, but certainly, to the shore, using his hand as a paddle. Deerslayer understood the whole artifice at a glance. A savage had swum off to the boat while he was occupied with his enemy on the point, got possession, and was using these means to urge it to the shore.

Satisfied that the man in the canoe could have no arms, Deerslayer did not hesitate to dash close alongside of the retiring boat, without deeming it necessary to raise his own rifle. As soon as the wash of the water, which he made in approaching, became audible to the prostrate savage, the latter sprang to his feet, and uttered

an exclamation that proved how completely he was taken by surprise.

"If you 've enj'yed yourself enough in that canoe, red-skin," Deerslayer coolly observed, stopping his own career in sufficient time to prevent an absolute collision between the two boats—"if you 've enj'yed yourself enough in that canoe, you 'll do a prudent act by taking to the lake ag'in. I'm reasonable in these matters, and don't crave your blood, though there's them about that would look upon you more as a due-bill for the bounty, than a human mortal. Take to the lake, this minute, afore we get to hot words."

The savage was one of those who did not understand a word of English, and he was indebted to the gestures of Deerslayer, and to the expression of an eye that did not often deceive, for an imperfect comprehension of his meaning. Perhaps, too, the sight of the rifle that lay so near the hand of the white man quickened his decision. At all events, he crouched like a tiger about to take his leap, uttered a yell, and the next instant his naked body had disappeared in the water. When he rose to take breath, it was at the distance of several yards from the

canoe, and the hasty glance he threw behind him, denoted how much he feared the arrival of a fatal messenger from the rifle of his foe. But the young man made no indication of any hostile intention. Deliberately securing the canoe to the others, he began to paddle from the shore; and by the time the Indian reached the land, and had shaken himself, like a spaniel on quitting the water, his dreaded enemy was already beyond rifle-shot, on his way to the castle. As was so much his practice, Deerslayer did not fail to soliloquize on what had just occurred while steadily pursuing his course towards the point of destination.

"Well, well"—he commenced—"'t would have been wrong to kill a human mortal without an object. Scalps are of no account with me, and life is sweet, and ought not to be taken marcilessly by them that have white gifts. The savage was a Mingo, it's true; and I make no doubt he is, and will be, as long as he lives, a ra'al riptyle and vagabond; but that's no reason I should forget my gifts, and colour. No, no, let him go; if ever we meet ag'in, rifle in hand, why then 't will be seen which has the stoutest heart and the quickest eye.—Hawkeye! That's

not a bad name for a warrior, sounding much more manful and valiant than Deerslayer! 'T wouldn't be a bad title to begin with and it has been fairly 'arned. If 't was Chingachgook, now, he might go home and boast of his deeds, and the chiefs would name him Hawkeye in a minute; but it don't become white blood to brag, and 't isn't easy to see how the matter can be known, unless I do. Well, well—every thing is in the hands of Providence; this affair as well as another; I'll trust to that for getting my desarts in all things."

Having thus betrayed what might be termed his weak spot, the young man continued to paddle in silence, making his way diligently, and as fast as his tows would allow him, towards the castle. By this time the sun had not only risen, but it had appeared over the eastern mountains, and was shedding a flood of glorious light on this, as yet, unchristened sheet of water. The whole scene was radiant with beauty; and no one unaccustomed to the ordinary history of the woods, would fancy it had so lately witnessed incidents so ruthless and barbarous. As he approached the building of old Hutter, Deerslayer thought, or rather *felt*,

that its appearance was in singular harmony with all the rest of the scene. Although nothing had been consulted but strength and security, the rude massive logs, covered with their rough bark, the projecting roof, and the form, would contribute to render the building picturesque in almost any situation, while its actual position added novelty and piquancy to its other points of interest.

When Deerslayer drew nearer to the castle, however, objects of interest presented themselves, that at once eclipsed any beauties that might have distinguished the scenery of the lake, and the site of the singular edifice. Judith and Hetty stood on the platform, before the door, Hurry's door-yard, awaiting his approach with manifest anxiety; the former, from time to time taking a survey of his person and of the canoes through the old ship's spy-glass that has been already mentioned. Never probably did this girl seem more brilliantly beautiful than at that moment; the flush of anxiety and alarm increasing her colour to its richest tints, while the softness of her eyes, a charm that even poor Hetty shared with her, was deepened by intense concern. Such, at least,

without pausing, or pretending to analyze motives, or to draw any other very nice distinctions between cause and effect, were the opinions of the young man as his canoes reached the side of the ark, where he carefully fastened all three, before he put his foot on the platform.

CHAPTER VIII.

"His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles;
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate;
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart;
His heart as far from fraud, as heaven from earth."

SHAKESPEARE.

NEITHER of the girls spoke, as Deerslayer stood before them alone, his countenance betraying all the apprehension he felt on account of the two absent members of their party.

"Father!" Judith at length exclaimed, succeeding in uttering the word, as it might be, by a desperate effort.

"He 's met with misfortune, and there 's no use in concealing it," answered Deerslayer, in his direct and simple-minded manner. "He and Hurry are in Mingo hands, and Heaven only knows what 's to be the tarmination. I've

got the canoes safe, and that's a consolation, since the vagabonds will have to swim for it, or raft off, to come near this place. At sunset we 'll be reinforced by Chingachgook, if I can manage to get him into a canoe; and then, I think, we two can answer for the ark and the castle, 'till some of the officers in the garrisons hear of this war-path, which sooner or later must be the case, when we may look for succour from that quarter, if from no other."

"The officers!" exclaimed Judith, impatiently, her colour deepening, and her eye expressing a lively but passing emotion. "Who thinks or speaks of the heartless gallants, now? —We are sufficient of ourselves to defend the castle;—but what of my father, and of poor Hurry Harry?"

"'Tis natural you should feel this consarn for your own parent, Judith, and I suppose it's equally so that you should feel it for Hurry Harry, too."

Deerslayer then commenced a succinct but clear narrative of all that occurred during the night, in no manner concealing what had befallen his two companions, or his own opinion of what might prove to be the consequences.

The girls listened with profound attention, but neither betrayed that feminine apprehension and concern, which would have followed such a communication when made to those who were less accustomed to the hazards and accidents of a frontier life. To the surprise of Deerslayer, Judith seemed the most distressed, Hetty listening eagerly, but appearing to brood over the facts in melancholy silence, rather than betraying any outward signs of feeling. The former's agitation, the young man did not fail to attribute to the interest she felt in Hurry, quite as much as to her filial love, while Hetty's apparent indifference was ascribed to that mental darkness, which, in a measure, obscured her intellect, and which possibly prevented her from foreseeing all the consequences. Little was said, however, by either, Judith and her sister busying themselves in making the preparations for the morning meal, as they who habitually attend to such matters, toil on mechanically, even in the midst of suffering and sorrow. The plain but nutritious breakfast was taken by all three in sombre silence. The girls ate little, but Deerslayer gave proof of possessing one material requisite

of a good soldier, that of preserving his appetite in the midst of the most alarming and embarrassing circumstances. The meal was nearly ended before a syllable was uttered; then, however, Judith spoke in the convulsive and hurried manner in which feeling breaks through restraint, after the latter has become more painful than even the betrayal of emotion.

"Father would have relished this fish!" she exclaimed; "he says the salmon of the lakes is almost as good as the salmon of the sea."

"Your father has been acquainted with the sea, they tell me, Judith," returned the young man, who could not forbear throwing a glance of inquiry at the girl; for, in common with all who knew Hutter, he had some curiosity on the subject of his early history. "Hurry Harry tells me he was once a sailor."

Judith first looked perplexed; then, influenced by feelings that were novel to her, in more ways than one, she became suddenly communicative, and seemingly much interested in the discourse.

"If Hurry knows any thing of father's history, I would he had told it to me!" she cried.

"Sometimes I think, too, he was once a sailor, and then again I think he was not. If that chest were open, or if it could speak, it might let us into his whole history. But its fastenings are too strong to be broken like packthread."

Deerslayer turned to the chest in question, and for the first time examined it closely. Although discoloured, and bearing proofs of having received much ill-treatment, he saw that it was of materials and workmanship altogether superior to any thing of the same sort he had ever before beheld. The wood was dark, rich, and had once been highly polished, though the treatment it had received left little gloss on its surface, and various scratches and indentations proved the rough collisions that it had encountered with substances still harder than itself. The corners were firmly bound with steel, elaborately and richly wrought, while the locks, of which it had no less than three, and the hinges, were of a fashion and workmanship that would have attracted attention even in a warehouse of curious furniture. The chest was large too; and when Deerslayer arose, and endeavoured to raise an end by its massive

handle, he found that the weight fully corresponded with the external appearance.

"Did you never see that chest opened, Judith," the young man demanded with frontier freedom, for delicacy on such subjects was little felt among the people on the verge of civilization in that age, even if it be to-day.

"Never. Father has never opened it in my presence, if he ever opens it at all. No one here has ever seen its lid raised, unless it be father; nor do I even know that he has ever seen it."

"Now, you're wrong, Judith," Hetty quietly answered. "Father *has* raised the lid, and *I've* seen him do it."

A feeling of manliness kept the mouth of Deerslayer shut; for, while he would not have hesitated about going far beyond what would be thought the bounds of propriety in questioning the elder sister, he had just scruples about taking what might be thought an advantage of the feeble intellect of the younger. Judith, being under no such restraint, however, turned quickly to the last speaker, and continued the discourse.

"When and where did you ever see that chest opened, Hetty?"

"Here, and again and again. Father often opens it, when *you* are away, though he don't in the least mind my being by, and seeing all he does, as well as hearing all he says."

"And what is it that he does, and what does he say?"

"That I cannot tell *you*, Judith," returned the other, in a low, but resolute voice. "*Father's* secrets are not *my* secrets."

"Secrets! This is stranger still, Deerslayer, that father should tell them to Hetty, and not tell them to me!"

"There's good reason for that, Judith, though you're not to know it. Father's not here to answer for himself, and I'll say no more about it."

Judith and Deerslayer looked surprised, and for a minute, the first seemed pained. But, suddenly recollecting herself, she turned away from her sister, as if in pity for her weakness, and addressed the young man.

"You've told but half your story," she said, "breaking off at the place where you went to sleep in the canoe—or, rather, where you rose to listen to the cry of the loon. We heard the call of the loons, too, and thought

their cries might bring a storm, though we are little used to tempests on this lake, at this season of the year."

"The winds blow, and the tempests howl as God pleases; sometimes at one season, and sometimes at another," answered Deerslayer; "and the loons speak accordin' to their natur'. Better would it be, if men were as hónest and frank. After I rose to listen to the birds, finding it could not be Hurry's signal, I lay down and slept. When the day dawned I was up and stirring as usual, and then I went in chase of the two canoes, lest the Mingos should lay hands on 'em."

"You have not told us all, Deerslayer," said Judith, earnestly. "We heard rifles under the eastern mountain; the echoes were full and long, and came so soon after the reports, that the pieces must have been fired on, or quite near to the shore. Our ears are used to these signs, and are not to be deceived."

"They 've done their duty, gal, this time; yes, they 've done their duty. Rifles have been sighted this morning, ay, and triggers pulled, too, though not as often as they might have been. One warrior has gone to his happy

hunting-grounds, and that's the whole of it. A man of white blood, and white gifts, is not to be expected to boast of his expl'ites and to flourish scalps."

Judith listened almost breathlessly; and, when Deerslayer, in his quiet, modest manner, seemed disposed to quit the subject, she rose, and crossing the room, took a seat by his side. The manner of the girl had nothing forward about it, though it betrayed the quick instinct of female affection, and the sympathizing kindness of a woman's interest. She even took the hard hand of the hunter, and pressed it in both her own, unconsciously to herself, perhaps while she looked earnestly and even reproachfully into his sun-burned face.

"You have been fighting the savages, Deerslayer, singly and by yourself!" she said. "In your wish to take care of us—of Hetty—of me, perhaps—you've fought the enemy bravely, with no eye to encourage your deeds, or to witness your fall, had it pleased Providence to suffer so great a calamity!"

"I've fou't, Judith; yes I *have* fou't the inimy, and that, too, for the first time in my life. These things must be, and they bring

with 'em a mixed feelin' of sorrow and triumph. Human natur is a fightin' natur', I suppose, as all nations kill in battle, and we must be true to our rights and gifts. What has yet been done is no great matter, but, should Chingachgook come to the rock this evening, as is agreed atween us, and I get him off it, onbeknown to the savages, or, if known to them, ag'in their wishes and designs, then may we all look to something like warfare, afore the Mingos shall get possession of either the castle, or the ark, or yourselves."

"Who is this Chingachgook; from what place does he come, and *why* does he come *here?*"

"The questions are nat'ral, and right, I suppose, though the youth has a great name, already, in his own part of the country. Chingachgook is a Mohican by blood, consorting with the Delawares by usage, as is the case with most of his tribe; which has long been broken up by the increase of our colour. He is of the family of the great chiefs; Uncas, his father, having been the considerablest warrior and counsellor of his people. Even old Tamenund honours Chingachgook, though he is thought to

be yet too young to lead in war; and then the nation is so disparsed and diminished, that chieftainship among 'em has got to be little more than a name. Well, this war having commenced in 'arnest, the Delaware and I rendezvous'd an app'intment to meet this evening at sunset, on the rendezvous-rock, at the foot of this very lake, intending to come out on our first hostile expedition ag'in the Mingos. *Why* we come exactly this-a-way, is our own secret; but thoughtful young men, on a war-path, as you may suppose, do nothing without a calculation and a design."

"A Delaware can have no unfriendly intentions towards us," said Judith, after a moment's hesitation, "and we know you to be friendly."

"Treachery is the last crime I hope to be accused of," returned Deerslayer, hurt at the gleam of distrust that had shot through Judith's mind; "and least of all treachery to my own colour."

"No one suspects *you*, Deerslayer," the girl impetuously cried. "No—no—your honest countenance would be a sufficient surety for the truth of a thousand hearts! If all men

had as honest tongues, and no more promised what they did not mean to perform, there would be less wrong done in the world, and fine feathers and scarlet cloaks would not be thought excuses for baseness and deception."

The girl spoke with strong, nay, even with convulsed feeling, and her fine eyes, usually so soft and alluring, flashed fire as she concluded. Deerslayer could not but observe this extraordinary emotion; but with the tact of a courtier, he avoided not only any allusion to the circumstance, but succeeded in concealing the effect of his discovery on himself. Judith gradually grew calm again, and, as she was obviously anxious to appear to advantage in the eyes of the young man, she was soon able to renew the conversation as composedly as if nothing had occurred to disturb her.

"I have no right to look into your secrets, or the secrets of your friend, Deerslayer," she continued, "and am ready to take all you say on trust. If we can really get another male ally to join us, at this trying moment, it will aid us much; and I am not without hope that when the savages find we are able to keep the lake, they will offer to give up their prisoners

in exchange for skins, or at least for the keg of powder that we have in the house."

The young man had the words "scalps," and "bounty," on his lips, but a reluctance to alarm the feelings of the daughters prevented him from making the allusion he had intended to the probable fate of their father. Still, so little was he practised in the arts of deception, that his expressive countenance was, of itself, understood by the quick-witted Judith, whose intelligence had been sharpened by the risks and habits of her life.

"I understand what you mean," she continued, hurriedly, "and what you would say, but for the fear of hurting me—*us*, I mean; for Hetty loves her father quite as well as I do. But this is not as we think of Indians. They never scalp an unhurt prisoner, but would rather take him away alive; unless, indeed, the fierce wish for torturing should get the mastery of them. I fear nothing for my father's scalp, and little for his life. Could they steal on us, in the night, we should all probably suffer in this way; but men taken in open strife, are seldom injured; not, at least, until the time of torture comes."

"That 's tradition, I'll allow, and it's according to practice—but, Judith, do you know the 'ar'nd on which your father and Hutter went ag'in the savages?"

"I do; and a cruel errand it was! But what will you have? Men will be men, and some even that flaunt in their gold and silver, and carry the king's commission in their pockets, are not guiltless of equal cruelty." Judith's eye again flashed, but, by a desperate struggle, she resumed her composure. "I get warm when I think of all the wrong that men do," she added, affecting to smile, an effort in which she only succeeded indifferently well. "All this is silly. What is done, is done, and it cannot be mended by complaints. But the Indians think so little of the shedding of blood, and value men so much for the boldness of their undertakings, that, did they know the business on which their prisoners came, they would be more likely to honour, than to injure them for it."

"For a time, Judith; yes, I allow *that*, for a time. But, when that feelin' dies away, then will come the love of revenge. We must indivour, Chingachgook and I, we must indivour

to see what we can do to get Hurry and your father free; for the Mingos will, no doubt, hover about this lake some days, in order to make the most of their success."

"You think this Delaware can be depended on, Deerslayer?" demanded the girl, thoughtfully.

"As much as I can myself. You say you do not suspect *me*, Judith?"

"*You!*" taking his hand again, and pressing it between her own with a warmth that might have awakened the vanity of one less simple-minded, and more disposed to dwell on his own good qualities, "I would as soon suspect a brother! I have known you but a day, Deerslayer, but it has awakened the confidence of a year. Your name, however, is not unknown to me; for the gallants of the garrisons frequently speak of the lessons you have given them in hunting, and all proclaim your honesty."

"Do they ever talk of the shooting, gal?" inquired the other eagerly, after however laughing in a silent but heartfelt manner. "Do they ever talk of the shooting? I want to hear nothing about my own, for, if that isn't sartified to, by this time, in all these parts,

there's little use in being skilful and sure; but what do the officers say of their own—yes, what do they say of their own! Arms, as they call it, is their trade, and yet there's some among 'em that know very little how to use 'em!"

"Such, I hope, will not be the case with your friend Chingachgook as you call him—what is the English of his Indian name?"

"Big Sarpent—so called for his wisdom and cunning. Uncas is his ra'al name—all his family being called Uncas, until they get a title that has been 'arned by deeds."

"If he has all this wisdom, we may expect a useful friend in him, unless his own business in this part of the country should prevent him from serving us."

"I see no great harm in telling you his ar'n'd, after all, and as you may find means to help us, I will let you and Hetty into the whole matter, trusting that you'll keep the secret as if it was your own. You must know that Chingachgook is a comely Indian, and is much look'd upon and admired by the young women of his tribe, both on account of his family and on account of himself. Now, there

is a chief that has a daughter called Wah-ta!-Wah, which is intarpreted into Hist-oh!-Hist, in the English tongue, the rarest gal among the Delawares, and the one most sought after and craved for a wife by all the young warriors of the nation. Well, Chingachgook, among others, took a fancy to Wah-ta!-Wah, and Wah-ta!-Wah took a fancy to him." Here Deerslayer paused an instant; for, as he got thus far in his tale, Hetty Hutter arose, approached and stood attentive at his knee, as a child draws near to listen to the legends of its mother. "Yes, he fancied her, and she fancied him," resumed Deerslayer, after casting a friendly and approving glance at the innocent and interested girl; "and when that is the case, and all the elders are agreed, it does not often happen that the young couple keep apart. Chingachgook could'n't well carry off such a prize without making inimies among them that wanted her as much as he did himself. A sartain Briarthorn, as we call him in English, or Yocommon, as he is tarmed in Indian, took it most to heart, and we mistrust him of having a hand in all that followed. Wah-ta!-Wah went with her father and mother, two moons

ago, to fish for salmon on the western streams, where it is agreed by all in these parts, that fish most abounds, and while thus empl'y'd the gal vanished. For several weeks we could get no tidings of her; but here, ten days since, a runner that came through the Delaware country, brought us a message, by which we l'arn that Wah-ta!-Wah was stolen from her people —we think, but do not know it, by Briarthorn's sarcumventions—and that she was now with the inimy, who had adopted her, and wanted her to marry a young Mingo. The message said that the party intended to hunt and forage through this region, for a month or two, afore it went back into the Canadas, and that if we could contrive to get on a scent in this quarter, something might turn up that would lead to our getting the maiden off."

"And how does that concern *you*, Deerslayer?" demanded Judith, a little anxiously.

"It consarns me, as all things that touches a fri'nd consarns a fri'nd. I'm here as Chingachgook's aid and helper, and if we can get the young maiden he likes back ag'in, it will give me almost as much pleasure as if I had got back my own sweetheart."

"And where, then, is *your* sweetheart, Deerslayer?"

"She's in the forest, Judith—hanging from the boughs of the trees in a soft rain—in the dew on the open grass—the clouds that float about in the blue heavens—the birds that sing in the woods—the sweet springs where I slake my thirst—and in all the other glorious gifts that come from God's Providence!"

"You mean that, as yet, you've never loved one of my sex, but love best your haunts and your own manner of life."

"That's it—that's just it. I am white—have a white heart, and can't, in reason, love a red-skinned maiden, who must have a red-skin heart and feelin's. No, no, I'm sound enough in them particulars, and hope to remain so, at least till this war is over. I find my time too much taken up with Chingachgook's affair, to wish to have one of my own on my hands, afore that is settled."

"The girl that finally wins you, Deerslayer, will at least win an *honest* heart; one without treachery or guile; and that will be a victory that most of her sex ought to envy."

As Judith uttered this, her beautiful face had

a resentful frown on it; while a bitter smile lingered around a mouth that no derangement of the muscles could render any thing but handsome. Her companion observed the change, and, though little skilled in the workings of the female heart, he had sufficient native delicacy to understand that it might be well to drop the subject.

As the hour when Chingachgook was expected still remained distant, Deerslayer had time enough to examine into the state of the defences, and to make such additional arrangements as were in his power, and the exigency of the moment seemed to require. The experience and foresight of Hutter had left little to be done in these particulars; still several precautions suggested themselves to the young man, who may be said to have studied the art of frontier warfare, through the traditions and legends of the people among whom he had so long lived. The distance between the castle and the nearest point on the shore prevented any apprehension on the subject of rifle-bullets thrown from the land. The house was within musket-shot, in one sense, it was true, but aim was entirely out of the question, and even

Judith professed a perfect disregard of any danger from that source. So long, then, as the party remained in possession of the fortress, they were safe; unless their assailants could find the means to come off and carry it by fire or storm; or by some of the devices of Indian cunning and Indian treachery. Against the first source of danger, Hutter had made ample provision, and the building itself, the bark roof excepted, was not very combustible. The floor was scuttled in several places, and buckets provided with ropes, were in daily use, in readiness for any such emergency. One of the girls could easily extinguish any fire that might be lighted, provided it had not time to make much headway. Judith, who appeared to understand all her father's schemes of defence, and who had the spirit to take no unimportant share in the execution of them, explained all these details to the young man, who was thus saved much time and labour in making his investigations.

Little was to be apprehended during the day. In possession of the canoes and of the ark, no other vessel was to be found on the lake. Nevertheless, Deerslayer well knew that a raft

was soon made, and as dead trees were to be found in abundance near the water, did the savages seriously contemplate the risks of an assault, it would not be a very difficult matter to find the necessary means. The celebrated American axe, a tool that is quite unrivalled in its way, was then not very extensively known, and the savages were far from expert in the use of its hatchet-like substitute; still, they had sufficient practice in crossing streams by this mode to render it certain they would construct a raft, should they deem it expedient to expose themselves to the risks of an assault. The death of their warrior might prove a sufficient incentive, or it might act as a caution; but Deerslayer thought it more than possible that the succeeding night would bring matters to a crisis, and in this precise way. This impression caused him to wish ardently for the presence and succour of his Mohican friend, and to look forward to the approach of sunset with an increasing anxiety.

As the day advanced, the party in the castle matured their plans, and made their preparations. Judith was active, and seemed to find a pleasure in consulting and advising with her

new acquaintance, whose indifference to danger, manly devotion to herself and sister, guilelessness of manner, and truth of feeling, had won rapidly on both her imagination and her affections. Although the hours appeared long in some respects to Deerslayer, Judith did not find them so, and when the sun began to descend towards the pine-clad summits of the western hills, she felt and expressed her surprise that the day should so soon be drawing to a close. On the other hand, Hetty was moody and silent. She was never loquacious, or if she occasionally became communicative, it was under the influence of some temporary excitement, that served to arouse her unsophisticated mind; but, for hours at a time, in the course of this all-important day, she seemed to have absolutely lost the use of her tongue. Nor did apprehension on account of her father materially affect the manner of either sister. Neither appeared seriously to dread any evil greater than captivity, and once or twice, when Hetty did speak, she intimated the expectation that Hutter would find the means to liberate himself. Although Judith was less sanguine on this head, she too betrayed the hope that

propositions for a ransom would come, when the Indians discovered that the castle set their expedients and artifices at defiance. Deerslayer, however, treated these passing suggestions as the ill-digested fancies of girls, making his own arrangements as steadily, and brooding over the future as seriously, as if they had never fallen from their lips.

At length the hour arrived when it became necessary to proceed to the place of rendezvous appointed with the Mohican; or Delaware, as Chingachgook was more commonly called. As the plan had been matured by Deerslayer, and fully communicated to his companions, all three set about its execution, in concert, and intelligently. Hetty passed into the ark, and fastening two of the canoes together, she entered one, and paddled up to a sort of gateway in the palisadoes that surrounded the building, through which she carried both; securing them beneath the house by chains that were fastened within the building. These palisadoes were trunks of trees driven firmly into the mud, and served the double purpose of a small enclosure that was intended to be used in this very manner, and to keep any enemy that might

approach in boats at arm's length. Canoes thus *docked* were, in a measure, hid from sight, and as the gate was properly barred and fastened, it would not be an easy task to remove them, even in the event of their being seen. Previously, however, to closing the gate, Judith also entered within the enclosure with the third canoe, leaving Deerslayer busy in securing the door and windows inside the building, over her head. As every thing was massive and strong, and small saplings were used as bars, it would have been the work of an hour or two to break into the building, when Deerslayer had ended his task, even allowing the assailants the use of any tools but the axe, and to be unresisted. This attention to security arose from Hutter's having been robbed once or twice, by the lawless whites of the frontiers, during some of his many absences from home.

As soon as all was fast in the inside of the dwelling, Deerslayer appeared at a trap from which he descended into the canoe of Judith. When this was done, he fastened the door with a massive staple and stout padlock. Hetty was then received in the canoe, which was shoved outside of the palisadoes. The next

precaution was to fasten the gate, and the keys were carried into the ark. The three were now fastened out of the dwelling, which could only be entered by violence, or by following the course taken by the young man in quitting it.

The glass had been brought outside as a preliminary step, and Deerslayer next took a careful survey of the entire shore of the lake, as far as his own position would allow. Not a living thing was visible, a few birds excepted, and even the last fluttered about in the shades of the trees, as if unwilling to encounter the heat of a sultry afternoon. All the nearest points, in particular, were subjected to severe scrutiny, in order to make certain that no raft was in preparation; the result every where giving the same picture of calm solitude. A few words will explain the greatest embarrassment belonging to the situation of our party. Exposed themselves to the observation of any watchful eyes, the movements of their enemies were concealed by the drapery of a dense forest. While the imagination would be very apt to people the latter with more warriors than it really contained, their own weakness must be too apparent to all who might chance to cast a glance in their direction.

"Nothing is stirring, hows'ever," exclaimed Deerslayer, as he finally lowered the glass, and prepared to enter the ark: "if the vagabonds do harbour misohief in their minds, they are too cunning to let it be seen; it's true, a raft may be in preparation in the woods, but it has not yet been brought down to the lake. They can't guess that we are about to quit the castle, and, if they did, they've no means of knowing where we intend to go."

"This is so true, Deerslayer," returned Judith, "that now all is ready, we may proceed, at once, boldly, and without the fear of being followed—else we shall be behind our time."

"No—no—the matter needs management—for, though the savages are in the dark as to Chingachgook and the rock, they've eyes and legs, and will see in what direction we steer, and will be sartain to follow us. I shall strive to baffle 'em, hows'ever, by heading the scow in all manner of ways, first in one quarter, and then in another, until they get to be a-leg-weary, and tired of tramping after us."

So far as it was in his power, Deerslayer was as good as his word. In less than five minutes after this speech was made, the whole party

was in the ark and in motion. There was a gentle breeze from the north; and boldly hoisting the sail, the young man laid the head of the unwieldly craft in such a direction as, after making a liberal but necessary allowance for lee-way, would have brought it ashore a couple of miles down the lake, and on its eastern side. The sailing of the ark was never very swift, though, floating as it did on the surface, it was not difficult to get it in motion, or to urge it along over the water, at the rate of some three or four miles in the hour. The distance between the castle and the rock was a little more than two leagues. Knowing the punctuality of an Indian, Deerslayer had made his calculations closely, and had given himself a little more time than was necessary to reach the place of rendezvous, with a view to delay, or to press his arrival, as might prove most expedient. When he hoisted the sail, the sun lay above the western hills, at an elevation that promised rather more than two hours of day; and a few minutes satisfied him that the progress of the scow was such as to equal his expectations.

It was a glorious June afternoon, and never

did that solitary sheet of water seem less like an arena of strife and bloodshed. The light air scarce descended as low as the bed of the lake, hovering over it, as if unwilling to disturb its deep tranquillity, or to ruffle its mirror-like surface. Even the forests appeared to be slumbering in the sun, and a few piles of fleecy clouds had lain for hours along the northern horizon, like fixtures in the atmosphere, placed there purely to embellish the scene. A few aquatic fowls occasionally skimmed along the water, and a single raven was visible, sailing high above the trees, and keeping a watchful eye on the forest beneath him, in order to detect any thing having life that the mysterious woods might offer as prey.

The reader will probably have observed, that amidst the frankness and abruptness of manner which marked the frontier habits of Judith, her language was superior to that used by her male companions, her own father included. This difference extended as well to pronunciation, as to the choice of words and phrases. Perhaps nothing so soon betrays the education and association as the modes of speech; and few accomplishments so much aid the charm of

female beauty as a graceful and even utterance, while nothing so soon produces the disenchantment that necessarily follows a discrepancy between appearance and manner, as a mean intonation of voice, or a vulgar use of words. Judith and her sister were marked exceptions to all the girls of their class along that whole frontier; the officers of the nearest garrison having often flattered the former with the belief that few ladies of the towns acquitted themselves better than herself in this important particular. This was far from being literally true, but it was sufficiently near the fact to give birth to the compliment. The girls were indebted to their mother for this advantage, having acquired from her, in childhood, an advantage that no subsequent study or labour can give without a drawback, if neglected beyond the earlier periods of life. Who that mother was, or rather had been, no one but Hutter knew. She had now been dead two summers, and, as was stated by Hurry, she had been buried in the lake; whether in indulgence of a prejudice, or from a reluctance to take the trouble to dig her grave, had frequently been a matter of discussion between

the rude beings of that region. Judith had never visited the spot, but Hetty was present at the interment, and she often paddled a canoe about sunset, or by the light of the moon, to the place and gazed down into the limpid water, in the hope of being able to catch a glimpse of a form that she had so tenderly loved from infancy to the sad hour of their parting.

"Must we reach the rock exactly at the moment the sun sets?" Judith demanded of the young man, as they stood near each other, Deerslayer holding the steering-oar, and she working with a needle at some ornament of dress, that much exceeded her station in life, and was altogether a novelty in the woods. "Will a few minutes, sooner or later, alter the matter? it will be very hazardous to remain long near the shore as that rock!"

"That's it Judith; that's the very difficulty! The rock's within pi'nt blank for a gun-shot, and 'twill never do to hover about it too close and too long. When you have to deal with an Indian, you must calculate and manage, for a red natur' dearly likes sarcumvention. Now, you see, Judith, that I do not steer towards the

rock at all, but here to the eastward of it, whereby the savages will be tramping off in that direction, and get their legs awearied, and all for no advantage."

"You think, then, they see us, and watch our movements, Deerslayer? I was in hopes they might have fallen back into the woods, and left us to ourselves for a few hours."

"That's altogether a woman's consait. There's no let-up in an Indian's watchfulness when he's on a war-path; and eyes are on us at this minute, 'though the lake presarves us. We must draw near the rock on a calculation, and indivour to get the miscreants on a false scent. The Mingos have good noses, they tell me; but a white man's reason ought always to equalize their instinct."

Judith now entered into a desultory discourse with Deerslayer, in which the girl betrayed her growing interest in the young man; an interest that his simplicity of mind, and her decision of character, sustained as it was by the consciousness awakened by the consideration her personal charms so universally produced, rendered her less anxious to conceal than might otherwise have been the case. She was scarcely forward in her manner, though

there was sometimes a freedom in her glances, that it required all the aid of her exceeding beauty to prevent from awakening suspicions unfavourable to her discretion, if not to her morals. With Deerslayer, however, these glances were rendered less obnoxious to so unpleasant a construction; for she seldom looked at him, without discovering much of the sincerity and nature that accompany the purest emotions of woman. It was a little remarkable that, as his captivity lengthened, neither of the girls manifested any great concern for her father; but, as has been said already, their habits gave them confidence, and they looked forward to his liberation, by means of a ransom, with a confidence that might, in a great degree, account for their apparent indifference. Once before, Hutter had been in the hands of the Iroquois, and a few skins had readily effected his release. This event, however, unknown to the sisters, had occurred in a time of peace between England and France, and when the savages were restrained, instead of being encouraged to commit their excesses, by the policy of the different colonial governments.

While Judith was loquacious and caressing in her manner, Hetty remained thoughtful and

silent. Once, indeed, she drew near to Deerslayer, and questioned him a little closely as to his intentions, as well as concerning the mode of effecting his purpose; but her wish to converse went no farther. As soon as her simple queries were answered—and answered they all were in the fullest and kindest manner—she withdrew to her seat, and continued to work on a coarse garment that she was making for her father, sometimes humming a low melancholy air, and frequently sighing.

In this manner the time passed away; and when the sun was beginning to glow behind the fringe of pines that bounded the western hill, or about twenty minutes before it actually set, the ark was nearly as low as the point where Hutter and Hurry had been made prisoners. By sheering first to one side of the lake, and then to the other, Deerslayer had managed to create an uncertainty as to his object; and, doubtless, the savages, who were unquestionably watching his movements, were led to believe that his aim was to communicate with them, at or near this spot, and would hasten in that direction, in order to be in readiness to profit by circumstances. This artifice was well

managed; since the sweep of the bay, the curvature of the lake, and the low marshy land that intervened, would probably allow the ark to reach the rock, before its pursuers, if really collected near the point, could have time to make the circuit that would be required to get there by land. With a view to aid this deception, Deerslayer stood as near the western shore as was at all prudent; and then causing Judith and Hetty to enter the house, or cabin, and crouching himself so as to conceal his person by the frame of the scow, he suddenly threw the head of the latter round, and began to make the best of his way towards the outlet. Favoured by an increase in the wind, the progress of the ark was such as to promise the complete success of this plan, though the crab-like movement of the craft compelled the helmsman to keep its head looking in a direction very different from that in which it was actually moving.

CHAPTER IX.

"Yet art thou prodigal of smiles—
Smiles sweeter than thy frowns are stern:
Earth sends from all her thousand isles,
A shout at thy return.
The glory that comes down from thee
Bathes, in deep joy, the land and sea."

THE SKIES.

It may assist the reader in understanding the events we are about to record, if he has a rapidly sketched picture of the scene placed before his eyes at a single view. It will be remembered that the lake was an irregularly shaped basin, of an outline that, in the main, was oval, but with bays and points to relieve its formality and ornament its shores. The surface of this beautiful sheet of water was now glittering like a gem, in the last rays of the evening sun, and the setting of the whole

—hills clothed in the richest forest verdure—was lighted up with a sort of radiant smile, that is best described in the beautiful lines we have placed at the head of this chapter. As the banks, with few exceptions, rose abruptly from the water, even where the mountain did not immediately bound the view, there was a nearly broken fringe of leaves overhanging the placid lake—the trees starting out of the acclivities, inclining to the light, until in many instances, they extended their long limbs and straight trunks some forty or fifty feet beyond the line of the perpendicular. In these cases we allude only to the giants of the forest—pines of a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet in height—for, of the smaller growth, very many inclined so far as to steep their lower branches in the water.

In the position in which the ark had now got, the castle was concealed from view by the projection of a point, as, indeed, was the northern extremity of the lake itself. A respectable mountain, forest-clad, and rounded like all the rest, limited the view in that direction, stretching immediately across the whole of the fair scene, with the exception of a

deep bay that passed its western end; lengthening the basin for more than a mile. The manner in which the water flowed out of the lake, beneath the leafy arches of the trees that lined the sides of the stream, has already been mentioned, and it has also been said that the rock, which was a favourite place of rendezvous throughout all that region, and where Deerslayer now expected to meet his friend, stood near this outlet, and at no great distance from the shore. It was a large isolated stone, that rested on the bottom of the lake, apparently left there when the waters tore away the earth from around it, in forcing for themselves a passage down the river, and which had obtained its shape from the action of the elements, during the slow progress of centuries. The height of this rock could scarcely equal six feet, and, as has been said, its shape was not unlike that which is usually given to bee-hives, or to a haycock. The latter, indeed, gives the best idea, not only of its form, but of its dimensions. It stood, and still stands, for we are writing of real scenes, within fifty feet of the bank, and in water that was only two feet in depth, though there were seasons in

which its rounded apex, if such a term can properly be used, was covered by the lake. Many of the trees stretched so far forward as almost to blend the rock with the shore, when seen from a little distance; and one tall pine in particular overhung it in a way to form a noble and appropriate canopy to a seat that held many a forest chieftain, during the long succession of unknown ages in which America, and all it contained had existed apart in mysterious solitude, a world by itself; equally without a familiar history, and without an origin that the annals of man can reach.

When distant some two or three hundred feet from the shore, Deerslayer took in his sail, and he dropped his grapnel, as soon as he found the ark had drifted in a line that was directly to windward of the rock. The motion of the scow was then checked, when it was brought head to wind, by the action of the breeze. As soon as this was done, Deerslayer "paid out line," and suffered the vessel to "set down" upon the rock, as fast as the light air would force it to leeward. Floating entirely on the surface, this was soon effected, and the young man checked the drift when he was told

that the stern of the scow was within fifteen or eighteen feet of the desired spot.

In executing this manœuvre, Deerslayer had proceeded promptly; for, while he did not in the least doubt that he was both watched and followed by the foe, he believed he had distracted their movements, by the apparent uncertainty of his own, and he knew they could have no means of ascertaining that the rock was his aim, unless, indeed, one of the prisoners had betrayed him; a chance so improbable in itself, as to give him no concern. Notwithstanding the celerity and decision of his movements, he did not, however, venture so near the shore without taking due precautions to effect a retreat, in the event of its becoming necessary. He held the line in his hand, and Judith was stationed at a loop, on the side of the cabin next the shore, where she could watch the beach and the rocks, and give timely notice of the approach of either friend or foe. Hetty was also placed on watch, but it was to keep the trees over-head in view, lest some enemy might ascend one, and, by completely commanding the interior of the scow, render the defences of the hut, or cabin, useless.

The sun had disappeared from the lake and valley, when Deerslayer checked the ark in the manner mentioned. Still it wanted a few minutes to the true sunset, and he knew Indian punctuality too well to anticipate any unmanly haste in his friend. The great question was, whether, surrounded by enemies, as he was known to be, he had escaped their toils. The occurrences of the last twenty-four hours must be a secret to him, and, like himself, Chingachgook was yet young on a war-path. It was true, he came prepared to encounter the party that withheld his promised bride, but he had no means of ascertaining the extent of the danger he ran, or the precise positions occupied by either friends or foes. In a word, the trained sagacity, and untiring caution of an Indian, were all he had to rely on, amid the critical risks he unavoidably ran.

"Is the rock empty, Judith?" inquired Deerslayer, as soon as he had checked the drift of the ark, deeming it imprudent to venture unnecessarily near the shore. "Is any thing to be seen of the Delaware chief?"

"Nothing, Deerslayer. Neither rock, shore, tree, nor lake, seems to have ever held a human form."

"Keep close, Judith—keep close, Hetty—a rifle has a prying eye, a nimble foot, and a desperate fatal tongue. Keep close then, but keep up act*y*ve looks, and be on the alart. 'Twould grieve me to the heart, did any harm befal either of you."

"And *you*, Deerslayer!" exclaimed Judith, turning her handsome face from the loop, to bestow a gracious and grateful look on the young man; "do *you* 'keep close,' and have a proper care that the savages do not catch a glimpse of you! A bullet might be as fatal to *you*, as to one of us; and the blow that you felt, would be felt by all."

"No fear of me, Judith—no fear of me, my good gal. Do not look this-a-way, although you look so pleasant and comely, but keep your eyes on the rock, and the shore, and the———"

Deerslayer was interrupted by a slight exclamation from the girl, who, in obedience to his hurried gestures, as much as in obedience to his words, had immediately bent her looks again in the opposite direction.

"What is 't?—what is 't, Judith?" he hastily demanded. "Is any thing to be seen?"

"There is a man on the rock!—an Indian warrior, in his paint, and armed!"

"Where does he wear his hawk's feather?" eagerly added Deerslayer, relaxing his hold of the line, in readiness to drift nearer to the place of rendezvous. "Is it fast to the warlock, or does he carry it above the left ear?"

"'Tis as you say, above the left ear; he smiles, too, and mutters the word 'Mohican.'"

"God be praised, 'tis the Sarpent, at last!" exclaimed the young man, suffering the line to slip through his hands, until hearing a light bound in the other end of the craft, he instantly checked the rope, and began to haul it in again, under the assurance that his object was effected.

At that moment the door of the cabin was opened hastily, and a warrior, darting through the little room, stood at Deerslayer's side, simply uttering the exclamation, "Hugh!" At the next instant, Judith and Hetty shrieked, and the air was filled with the yell of twenty savages, who came leaping through the branches down the bank, some actually falling headlong into the water in their haste.

"Pull, Deerslayer," cried Judith, hastily barring the door, in order to prevent an inroad by the passage through which the Delaware had just entered "pull, for life and death—the lake is full of savages, wading after us!"

The young men—for Chingachgook immediately came to his friend's assistance—needed no second bidding, but they applied themselves to their task in a way that showed how urgent they deemed the occasion. The great difficulty was in suddenly overcoming the *vis inertiæ* of so large a mass; for, once in motion, it was easy to cause the scow to skim the water with all the necessary speed.

"Pull, Deerslayer, for Heaven's sake!" cried Judith again at the loop. "These wretches rush into the water like hounds following their prey! Ah!—the scow moves! and now the water deepens to the arm-pits of the foremost, still they rush forward, and will seize the ark!"

A slight scream, and then a joyous laugh followed from the girl; the first produced by a desperate effort of their pursuers, and the last by its failure; the scow, which had now got fairly in motion, gliding ahead into deep water, with a velocity that set the designs of their

enemies at naught. As the two men were prevented, by the position of the cabin from seeing what passed astern, they were compelled to inquire of the girls into the state of the chase.

"What now, Judith?—what next?—Do the Mingos still follow, or are we quit of 'em for the present?" demanded Deerslayer, when he felt the rope yielding, as if the scow was going fast ahead, and heard the scream and the laugh of the girl almost in the same breath.

"They have vanished!—one, the last, is just burying himself in the bushes of the bank—there, he has disappeared in the shadows of the trees! You have got your friend, and we are all safe!"

The two men now made another great effort, pulled the ark up swiftly to the grapnel, tripped it, and when the scow had shot some distance, and lost its way, they let the anchor drop again; then, for the first time since their meeting, they ceased their efforts. As the floating house now lay several hundred feet from the shore, and offered a complete protection against bullets, there was no longer any danger, or any motive for immediate exertion.

The manner in which the two friends now recognised each other, was highly characteristic. Chingachgook, a noble, tall, handsome, and athletic young Indian warrior, first examined his rifle with care, opening the pan, to make sure the priming was not wet; and assured of this important fact, he next cast furtive but observant glances around him, at the strange habitation, and at the two girls; still he spoke not, and most of all, did he avoid the betrayal of a womanish curiosity by asking questions.

"Judith and Hetty," said Deerslayer, with an untaught, natural courtesy, "this is the Mohican chief of whom you've heard me speak; Chingachgook, as he is called, which signifies the Big Sarpent; so named for his wisdom, and prudence, and cunning, and my 'arliest and latest friend. I know'd it must be he, by the hawk's feather over the left ear, most other warriors wearing 'em on the war-lock."

As Deerslayer ceased speaking, he laughed heartily, excited more perhaps by the delight of having got his friend safe at his side, under circumstances so trying, than by any conceit that happened to cross his fancy, and exhibit-

ing this outbreaking of feeling in a manner that was a little remarkable, since his merriment was not accompanied by any noise. Although Chingachgook both understood and spoke English, he was unwilling to communicate his thoughts in it, like most Indians; and when he had met Judith's cordial shake of the hand, and Hetty's milder salute, in the courteous manner that became a chief, he turned away, apparently to await the moment when it might suit his friend to enter into an explanation of his future intentions, and to give a narrative of what had passed since their separation. The other understood his meaning, and discovered his own mode of reasoning in the matter by addressing the girls.

"This wind will soon die away altogether, now the sun is down," he said, "and there is no need of rowing ag'in it. In half an hour, or so it will either be a flat calm, or the air will come off from the south shore, when we will begin our journey back ag'in to the castle; in the meanwhile, the Delaware and I will talk over matters, and get correct idees of each other's notions consarning the course we ought to take."

No one opposed this proposition, and the girls withdrew into the cabin to prepare the evening meal, while the two young men took their seats on the head of the scow, and began to converse. The dialogue was in the language of the Delawares. As that dialect, however, is but little understood, even by the learned, we shall, not only on this, but on all subsequent occasions, render such parts as it may be necessary to give closely, into liberal English; preserving, as far as possible, the idioms and peculiarities of the respective speakers, by way of presenting the pictures in the most graphic forms to the minds of the readers.

It is unnecessary to enter into the details first related by Deerslayer, who gave a brief narrative of the facts that are already familiar to those who have read our pages. In relating these events, however, it may be well to say that the speaker touched only on the outlines, more particularly abstaining from saying any thing about his encounter with, and victory over the Iroquois, as well as to his own exertions in behalf of the deserted young women. When Deerslayer ended, the Delaware took up the narrative, in turn, speaking sententi-

ously, and with great dignity. His account was both clear and short, nor was it embellished by any incidents that did not directly concern the history of his departure from the villages of his people, and his arrival in the valley of the Susquehannah. On reaching the latter, which was at a point only half a mile south of the outlet, he had soon struck a trail, which gave him notice of the probable vicinity of enemies. Being prepared for such an occurrence, the object of the expedition calling him directly into the neighbourhood of the party of Iroquois that was known to be out, he considered the discovery as fortunate, rather than the reverse, and took the usual precautions to turn it to account. First following the river to its source, and ascertaining the position of the rock, he met another trail, and had actually been hovering for hours on the flanks of his enemies, watching equally for an opportunity to meet his mistress, and to take a scalp; and it may be questioned which he most ardently desired. He kept near the lake, and occasionally he ventured to some spot where he could get a view of what was passing on its surface. The ark had been seen and watched,

from the moment it hove in sight, though the young chief was necessarily ignorant that it was to be the instrument of effecting the desired juncture with his friend. The uncertainty of its movements, and the fact that it was unquestionably managed by white men, led him to conjecture the truth, however, and he held himself in readiness to get on board whenever a suitable occasion might offer. As the sun drew near the horizon, he repaired to the rock, where, on emerging from the forest, he was gratified in finding the ark lying apparently in readiness to receive him. The manner of his appearance, and of his entrance into the craft, is known.

Although Chingachgook had been closely watching his enemies for hours, their sudden and close pursuit, as he reached the scow, was as much a matter of surprise to himself, as it had been to his friend. He could only account for it, by the fact of their being more numerous than he had at first supposed, and by their having out parties of the existence of which he was ignorant. Their regular, and permanent encampment, if the word permanent can be applied to the residence of a party that intended to remain out, in all probability, but a few

weeks, was not far from the spot where Hutter and Hurry had fallen into their hands, and, as a matter of course, near a spring.

"Well, Sarpent," asked Deerslayer, when the other had ended his brief but spirited narrative, speaking always in the Delaware tongue, which for the reader's convenience only, we render into the peculiar vernacular of the speaker, "well, Sarpent, as you've been scouting around these Mingos, have you any thing to tell us of their captyves; the father of these young women, and another, who, I somewhat conclude, is the lovyer of one of 'em."

"Chingachgook has seen them. An old man, and a young warrior—the falling hemlock and the tall pine."

"You're not so much out, Delaware; you're not so much out. Old Hutter is decaying of a sartainty, though many solid blocks might be hewn out of his trunk yet; and, as for Hurry Harry, so far as height, and strength, and comeliness go, he may be called the pride of the human forest. Were the men bound, or, in any manner, suffering torture? I ask on account of the young women; who, I dare to say, would be glad to know."

"It is not so, Deerslayer. The Mingos are

too many to cage their game. Some watch; some sleep; some scout; some hunt. The pale-faces are treated like brothers to-day; to-morrow they will lose their scalps."

"Yes, that 's red natur', and must be submitted to! Judith and Hetty, here's comforting tidings for you, the Delaware telling me that neither your father nor Hurry Harry is in suffering; but, bating the loss of liberty, as well off as we are ourselves. Of course they are kept in the camp; otherwise they do much as they please."

"I rejoice to hear this, Deerslayer," returned Judith, "and now we are joined by your friend, I make no manner of question that we shall find an opportunity to ransom the prisoners. If there are any women in the camp, I have articles of dress that will catch their eyes; and, should the worst come to the worst, we can open the good chest, which, I think, will be found to hold things that may tempt the chiefs."

"Judith," said the young man, looking up at her with a smile, and an expression of earnest curiosity, that, spite of the growing obscurity, did not escape the watchful looks of the girl,

" can you find it in your heart to part with your own finery to release prisoners; even though one be your own father, and the other is your sworn suitor and lovyer?"

The flush on the face of the girl arose in part from resentment, but more perhaps from a gentler and novel feeling, that, with the capricious waywardness of taste, had been rapidly rendering her more sensitive to the good opinion of the youth who questioned her, than to that of any other person. Suppressing the angry sensation, with instinctive quickness, she answered with a readiness and truth, that caused her sister to draw near to listen, though the obtuse intellect of the latter was far from comprehending the workings of a heart as treacherous, as uncertain, and as impetuous in its feelings, as that of the spoiled and flattered beauty.

" Deerslayer," answered Judith, after a moment's pause; " I shall be honest with *you*. I confess, that the time *has* been when what you call finery, was to me the dearest thing on earth; but I begin to feel differently. Though Hurry Harry is naught to me, nor ever can be, I would give all I own to set him free. If I

would do this, for blustering, bullying, talking Hurry, who has nothing but good looks to recommend him, you may judge what I would do for my own father."

"This sounds well, and is according to woman's gifts. Ah's me! The same feelin's is to be found among the young women of the Delawares. I've known 'em, often and often, sacrifice their vanity to their hearts. 'Tis as it should be—'tis as it should be I suppose, in both colours. Woman was created for the feelin's, and is pretty much ruled by feelin'."

"Would the savages let father go, if Judith and I gave them all our best things?" demanded Hetty, in her innocent, mild, manner.

"Their women might interfere, good Hetty; yes, their women might interfere with such an ind in view. But, tell me, Sarpent, how is it as to squaws among the knaves; have they many of their own women in the camp?"

The Delaware heard and understood all that passed; though with Indian gravity and finesse he had sat, with averted face, seemingly inattentive to a discourse in which he had no direct concern. Thus appealed to, however, he answered his friend in his ordinary sententious manner.

"Six," he said, holding up all the fingers of one hand, and the thumb of the other; "besides *this*." The last number denoted his betrothed; whom, with the poetry and truth of nature, he described by laying his hand on his own heart.

"Did you see her, chief—did you get a glimpse of her pleasant countenance, or come close enough to her ear, to sing in it the song she loves so well?"

"No, Deerslayer—the trees were too many, and leaves covered their boughs like clouds hiding the heavens in a storm. But," and the young warrior turned his dark face towards his friend with a smile on it that illuminated its fierce-looking paint, and naturally stern lineaments, with a bright gleam of human feeling; "Chingachgook heard the laugh of Wah-ta!-Wah; he knew it from the laugh of the women of the Iroquois. It sounded in his ears like the chirp of the wren."

"Ay, trust a lovyer's ear for that; and a Delaware's ear for all sounds that are ever heard in the woods. I know not why it is so, Judith, but when young men—and I dares to say it may be all the same with young women too—but when they get to have kind feelin's

towards each other, it's wonderful how pleasant the laugh or the speech becomes to the other person. I've seen grim warriors listening to the chattering and the laughing of young girls, as if it was church music; such as is heard in the old Dutch church, that stands in the great street of Albany, where I've been, more than once, with peltry and game."

"And *you*, Deerslayer," said Judith quickly, and with more sensibility than marked her usually light and thoughtless manner; "have *you* never felt how pleasant it is to listen to the laugh of the girl you love?"

"Lord bless you, gal!—why I've never lived enough among my own colour to drop into these sort of feelin's—no, never! I dares to say, they are nat'ral and right; but to me there's no music so sweet as the sighing of the wind in the tree tops, and the rippling of a stream from a full, sparkling, nat*y*ve fountain of pure fresh water; unless, indeed," he continued, dropping his head for an instant in a thoughtful manner; "unless, indeed, it be the open mouth of a sartain hound, when I'm on the track of a fat buck. As for unsartain dogs, I care little for their cries, seein' they are as

likely to speak when the deer is not in sight, as when it is."

Judith walked slowly and pensively away, nor was there any of her ordinary calculating coquetry, in the light tremulous sigh that, unconsciously to herself, arose to her lips. On the other hand, Hetty listened with guileless attention; though it struck her simple mind as singular, that the young man should prefer the melody of the woods, to the songs of girls, or even to the laugh of innocence and joy. Accustomed, however, to defer in most things to her sister, she soon followed Judith into the cabin, where she took a seat, and remained pondering intensely over some occurrence, or resolution, or opinion, which was a secret to all but herself. Left alone, Deerslayer and his friend resumed their discourse.

"Has the young pale-face hunter been long on this lake?" demanded the Delaware, after courteously waiting for the other to speak first.

"Only since yesterday noon, Sarpent; though that has been long enough to see and do much."

The gaze that the Indian fastened on his companion was so keen, that it seemed to mock

the gathering darkness of the night. As the other furtively returned his look, he saw the two black eyes glistening on him, like the balls of the panther, or those of the penned wolf. He understood the meaning of this glowing gaze, and answered evasively, as he fancied would best become the modesty of a white man's gifts.

"'Tis as you suspect, Sarpent; yes, 'tis somewhat that-a-way. I *have* fell in with the inimy, and I suppose it may be said I've fou't them, too."

An exclamation of delight and exultation escaped the Indian; and then, laying his hand eagerly on the arm of his friend, he asked if there were any scalps taken.

"That I *will* maintain, in the face of all the Delaware tribe, old Tamenund, and your father, the great Uncas, as well as the rest, is ag'in white gifts! *My* scalp is on my head, as you can see, Sarpent, and that was the only scalp that was in danger, when one side was altogether Christian and white."

"Did no warrior fall?—Deerslayer did not get his name by being slow of sight, or clumsy with the rifle!"

"In that particular, chief, you 're nearer reason, and therefore nearer being right. I may say one Mingo fell."

"A chief!" demanded the other, with startling vehemence.

"Nay, that's more than I know, or can say. He was artful, and treacherous, and stout-hearted; and may well have gained popularity enough with his people to be named to that rank. The man fou't well, though his eye was'n't quick enough for one who had had his schooling in your company, Delaware."

"My brother and friend struck the body?"

"That was uncalled for, seeing that the Mingo died in my arms. The truth may as well be said, at once; he fou't like a man of red gifts, and I fou't like a man with gifts of my own colour. God gave me the victory; I could'n't fly in the face of his providence by forgetting my birth and natur.' White he made me, and white I must live and die."

"Good! Deerslayer is a pale-face, and has pale-face hands. A Delaware will look for the scalp, and hang it on a pole, and sing a song in his honour, when we go back to our people. The honour belongs to the tribe; it must not be lost."

"This is easy talking, but 't will not be as easy doing. The Mingo's body is in the hands of his fri'nds, and, no doubt, is hid in some hole, where Delaware cunning will never be able to get at the scalp."

The young man then gave his friend a succinct, but clear account of the event of the morning, concealing nothing of any moment, and yet touching on every thing modestly, and with a careful attention to avoid the Indian habit of boasting. Chingachgook again expressed his satisfaction at the honour won by his friend, and then both arose, the hour having arrived when it became prudent to move the ark further from the land.

It was now quite dark; the heavens having become clouded, and the stars hid. The north wind had ceased, as was usual, with the setting of the sun, and a light air arose from the south. This change favouring the design of Deerslayer, he lifted his grapnel, and the scow immediately and quite perceptibly began to drift more into the lake. The sail was set, when the motion of the craft increased to a rate not much less than two miles in the hour. As this superseded the necessity of rowing—an

occupation that an Indian would not be likely to desire — Deerslayer, Chingachgook and Judith seated themselves in the stern of the scow, where the first governed its movements by holding the oar. Here they discoursed on their future movements, and on the means that ought to be used in order to effect the liberation of their friends.

In this dialogue Judith held a material part; the Delaware readily understanding all she said, while his own replies and remarks, both of which were few and pithy, were occasionally rendered into English by his friend. Judith rose greatly in the estimation of her companion, in the half hour that followed. Prompt of resolution, and firm of purpose, her suggestions and expedients partook of her spirit and sagacity, both of which were of a character to find favour with men of the frontier. The events that had occurred since their meeting, as well as her isolated and dependent situation, induced the girl to feel towards Deerslayer like the friend of a year, instead of an acquaintance of a day; and so completely had she been won by his guileless truth of character and of feeling—pure novelties in our sex, as

respected her own experience—that his peculiarities had excited her curiosity, and created a confidence that had never been awakened by any other man. Hitherto she had been compelled to stand on the defensive in her intercourse with men—with what success was best known to herself; but here had she been suddenly thrown into the society, and under the protection of a youth, who evidently as little contemplated evil towards herself, as if he had been her brother. The freshness of his integrity, the poetry and truth of his feelings, and even the quaintness of his forms of speech, all had their influence and aided in awakening an interest that she found as pure as it was sudden and deep. Hurry's fine face and manly form had never compensated for his boisterous and vulgar turn; and her intercourse with the officers had prepared her to make comparisons under which even his great natural advantages suffered. But this very intercourse with the officers who occasionally came upon the lake to fish and hunt, had an effect in producing her present sentiments towards the young stranger. With them, while her vanity had been gratified, and her self-love strongly

awakened, she had many causes deeply to regret the acquaintance — if not to mourn over it, in secret sorrow—for it was impossible for one of her quick intellect not to perceive how hollow was the association between superior and inferior, and that she was regarded as the plaything of an idle hour, rather than as an equal and a friend, by even the best intentioned and least designing of her scarlet-clad admirers. Deerslayer, on the other hand, had a window in his breast, through which the light of his honesty was ever shining; and even his indifference to charms that so rarely failed to produce a sensation, piqued the pride of the girl and gave him an interest that another, seemingly more favoured by nature, might have failed to excite.

In this manner half an hour passed, during which time the ark had been slowly stealing over the water, the darkness thickening around it; though it was easy to see that the gloom of the forest at the southern end of the lake, was getting to be distant, while the mountains that lined the sides of the beautiful basin were overshadowing it, nearly from side to side. There was, indeed, a narrow stripe of water

in the centre of the lake, where the dim light that was still shed from the heavens fell upon its surface, in a line extending north and south; and along this faint track—a sort of inverted milky-way, in which the obscurity was not quite as dense as in other places—the scow held her course, he who steered well knowing that it led in the direction he wished to go. The reader is not to suppose, however, that any difficulty could exist as to the course. This would have been determined by that of the air, had it not been possible to distinguish the mountains, as well as by the dim opening to the south which marked the position of the valley in that quarter, above the plain of tall trees by a sort of lessened obscurity; the difference between the darkness of the forest, and that of the night, as seen only in the air. The peculiarities at length caught the attention of Judith and the Deerslayer, and the conversation ceased, to allow each to gaze at the solemn stillness and deep repose of nature.

"'Tis a gloomy night," observed the girl, after a pause of several minutes. "I hope we may be able to find the castle."

"Little fear of our missing *that*, if we keep

this path in the middle of the lake," returned the young man. "Natur' has made us aroad here, and, dim as it is, there'll be little difficulty in following it."

"Do you hear nothing, Deerslayer? It seemed as if the water was stirring quite near us!"

"Sartainly something *did* move the water, oncommon like; it must have been a fish. Them creatur's prey upon each other like men, and animals on the land; one has leaped into the air, and fallen back hard, into his own element. 'Tis of little use, Judith, for any to strive to get out of their elements, since it's natur' to stay in 'em; and natur' will have its way. Ha! *that* sounds like a paddle, used with more than common caution!"

At this moment, the Delaware bent forward, and pointed significantly into the boundary of gloom, as if some object had suddenly caught his eye. Both Deerslayer and Judith followed the direction of his gesture, and each got a view of a canoe at the same instant. The glimpse of this startling neighbour was dim, and, to eyes less practised, it might have been uncertain; though to those in the ark, the

object was evidently a canoe, with a single individual in it; the latter standing erect and paddling. How many lay concealed in its bottom, of course, could not be known. Flight, by means of oars, from a bark canoe impelled by vigorous and skilful hands, was utterly impracticable, and each of the men seized his rifle in expectation of a conflict.

"I can easily bring down the paddler," whispered Deerslayer, "but we'll first hail him, and ask his ar'n'd." Then raising his voice, he continued in a solemn manner, "Hold! If you come nearer, I must fire, though contrary to my wishes; and then sartain death will follow. Stop paddling, and answer!"

"Fire, and slay a poor, defenceless girl," returned a soft tremulous female voice, "and God will never forgive you! Go your way, Deerslayer, and let me go mine."

"Hetty!" exclaimed the young man and Judith in a breath; and the former sprang instantly to the spot where he had left the canoe they had been towing. It was gone, and he understood the whole affair. As for the fugitive, frightened at the menace, she ceased paddling, and remained dimly visible, resemb-

ling a spectral outline of a human form, standing on the water. At the next moment, the sail was lowered, to prevent the ark from passing the spot where the canoe lay. This last expedient, however, was not taken in time; for the momentum of so heavy a craft, and the impulsion of the air, soon set her by; bringing Hetty directly to windward, though still visible, as the change in the positions of the two boats now placed her in that species of milky-way which has been mentioned.

"What can this mean, Judith?" demanded Deerslayer. "Why has your sister taken the canoe and left us?"

"You know she is feeble-minded, poor girl! and she has her own ideas of what ought to be done. She loves her father more than most children love their parents—and then—"

"Then what, gal? This is a trying moment; one in which truth must be spoken!"

Judith felt a generous and womanly regret at betraying her sister, and she hesitated ere she spoke again. But once more urged by Deerslayer, and conscious herself of all the risks the whole party was running by the indiscretion of Hetty, she could refrain no longer.

"Then I fear, poor weak-minded Hetty has not been altogether able to see the vanity, and madness, and folly, that lie hid behind the handsome face and fine form of Hurry Harry. She talks of him in her sleep, and sometimes betrays the inclination in her waking moments."

"You think, Judith, that your sister is now bent on some mad scheme to serve her father and Hurry, which will, in all likelihood, give them ripstyles, the Mingos, the mastership of a canoe?"

"Such, I fear, will turn out to be the fact, Deerslayer. Poor Hetty has hardly sufficient cunning to outwit a savage."

All this while the canoe, with the form of Hetty erect in one end of it, was dimly perceptible; though the greater drift of the ark rendered it at each instant less and less distinct. It was evident no time was to be lost, lest it should altogether disappear. The rifles were now laid aside as useless; and then the two men seized the oars, and began to sweep the head of the scow round in the direction of the canoe. Judith, accustomed to the office, flew to the other end of the ark, and placed herself

at what might be called the helm. Hetty took the alarm at these preparations, which could not be made without noise, and started off like a bird that had been suddenly put up by the approach of unexpected danger.

As Deerslayer and his companion rowed with the energy of those who felt the necessity of straining every nerve, and Hetty's strength was impaired by a nervous desire to escape, the chase would have quickly terminated in the capture of the fugitive, had not the girl made several short and unlooked-for deviations in her course. These turnings gave her time, and they had also the effect of gradually bringing both canoe and ark within the deeper gloom, cast by the shadows from the hills. They also gradually increased the distance between the fugitive and her pursuers, until Judith called out to her companions to cease rowing, for she had completely lost sight of the canoe.

When this mortifying announcement was made, Hetty was actually so near as to understand every syllable her sister uttered; though the latter had used the precaution of speaking as low as circumstances would allow her to do, and to make herself heard. Hetty stopped

paddling at the same moment, and waited the result with an impatience that was breathless, equally from her late exertions, and her desire to land. A dead silence immediately fell on the lake; during which the three in the ark were using their senses differently, in order to detect the position of the canoe. Judith leant forward to listen, in the hope of catching some sound that might betray the direction in which her sister was stealing away; while her two companions brought their eyes as near as possible to a level with the water in order to detect any object that might be floating on its surface. All was vain, however, for neither sound nor sight rewarded their efforts. All this time, Hetty, who had not the cunning to sink into the canoe, stood erect, a finger pressed on her lips, gazing in the direction in which the voices had been heard, resembling a statue of profound and timid attention. Her ingenuity had barely sufficed to enable her to seize the canoe, and to quit the ark, in the noiseless manner related; and then it appeared to be momentarily exhausted. Even the doublings of the canoe had been as much the consequence of an uncertain hand, and of nervous agitation, as of any craftiness or calculation.

The pause continued several minutes; during which Deerslayer and the Delaware conferred together in the language of the latter. Then the oars dipped again, and the ark moved away, rowing with as little noise as possible. It steered westward, a little southerly, or in the direction of the encampment of the enemy. Having reached a point, at no great distance from the shore, and where the obscurity was intense, on account of the proximity of the land, it lay there near an hour, in waiting for the expected approach of Hetty; who, it was thought, would make the best of her way to that spot, as soon as she believed herself relieved from the danger of pursuit. No success rewarded this little blockade, however; neither appearance nor sound denoting the passage of the canoe. Disappointed at this failure, and conscious of the importance of getting possession of the fortress, before it could be seized by the enemy, Deerslayer now took his way towards the castle, with the apprehension that all his foresight in securing the canoes would be defeated by this unguarded and alarming movement on the part of the feeble-minded Hetty.

CHAPTER X.

"——But who in this wild wood
May credit give to either eye, or ear?
From rocky precipice or hollow cave,
'Midst the confused sound of rustling leaves,
And crackling boughs, and cries of nightly birds,
Returning seeming answer!"

JOANNA BAILLIE.

FEAR, as much as calculation, had induced Hetty to cease paddling, when she found that her pursuers did not know in which direction to proceed. She remained stationary, until the ark had pulled in near the encampment, as has been related in the preceding chapter; when she resumed the paddle, and with cautious strokes made the best of her way towards the western shore. In order to avoid her pursuers, however, who, she rightly suspected, would soon be rowing along that shore themselves,

the head of the canoe was pointed so far north, as to bring her to land on a point that thrust itself into the lake, at the distance of near a league from the outlet. Nor was this altogether the result of a desire to escape; for, feeble-minded as she was, Hetty Hutter had a good deal of that instinctive caution which so often keeps those whom God has thus visited from harm. She was perfectly aware of the importance of keeping the canoes from falling into the hands of the Iroquois; and long familiarity with the lake had suggested one of the simplest expedients by which this great object could be rendered compatible with her own purpose.

The point in question was the first projection that offered on that side of the lake, where a canoe, if set adrift with a southerly air, would float clear of the land, and where it would be no great violation of probabilities to suppose it might even hit the castle; the latter lying above it, almost in a direct line with the wind. Such then was Hetty's intention; and she landed on the extremity of the gravelly point, beneath an overhanging oak, with the express intention of shoving the canoe off from the shore, in order that it might drift up towards

her father's insulated abode. She knew, too, from the logs that occasionally floated about the lake, that did it miss the castle and its appendages, that the wind would be likely to change before the canoe could reach the northern extremity of the lake, and that Deerslayer might have an opportunity of regaining it in the morning, when no doubt he would be earnestly sweeping the surface of the water, and the whole of its wooded shores with the glass. In all this, too, Hetty was less governed by any chain of reasoning than by her habits; the latter often supplying the defects of mind, in human beings, as they perform the same office for animals of the inferior classes.

The girl was quite an hour finding her way to the point; the distance and the obscurity equally detaining her; but she was no sooner on the gravelly beach, than she prepared to set the canoe adrift in the manner mentioned. While in the act of pushing it from her, she heard low voices, that seemed to come from among the trees behind her. Startled at this unexpected danger, Hetty was on the point of springing into the canoe again, in order to seek safety in flight, when she thought she recog-

nised the tones of Judith's melodious voice. Bending forward, so as to catch the sounds more directly, they evidently came from the water; and then she understood that the ark was approaching from the south, and so close in with the western shore as necessarily to cause it to pass the point, within twenty yards of the spot where she stood. Here, then, was all she could desire; the canoe was shoved off into the lake, leaving its late occupant alone on the narrow strand.

When this act of self-devotion was performed, Hetty did not retire. The foliage of the overhanging trees and bushes would have almost concealed her person, had there been light; but in that obscurity it was utterly impossible to discover any object thus shaded, at the distance of a few feet. Flight, too, was perfectly easy, as twenty steps would effectually bury her in the forest. She remained, therefore, watching with intense anxiety the result of her expedient, intending to call the attention of the others to the canoe with her voice, should they appear to pass without observing it. The ark approached under its sail again; Deerslayer standing in its bow, with Judith

near him, and the Delaware at the helm. It would seem that, in the bay below, it had got too close to the shore, in the lingering hope of intercepting Hetty; for, as it came nearer, the latter distinctly heard the directions that the young man forward gave to his companion in order to clear the point.

"Lay her head more off the shore, Delaware," said Deerslayer, for the third time, speaking in English, that his fair companion might understand his words; "lay her head well off shore. We have got embayed here, and needs keep the mast clear of the trees. Judith, there's a canoe!"

The last words were uttered with great earnestness, and Deerslayer's hand was on his rifle ere they were fairly out of his mouth. But the truth flashed on the mind of the quick-witted girl, and she instantly told her companion that the boat *must* be that in which her sister had fled.

"Keep the scow straight, Delaware; steer as straight as your bullet flies when sent ag'in a buck; there—I have it."

The canoe was seized, and immediately secured again to the side of the ark. At the next

moment the sail was lowered, and the motion of the ark arrested by means of the oars.

"Hetty!" called out Judith, concern, even affection betraying itself in her tones; "are you within hearing, sister—for God's sake answer, and let me hear the sound of your voice again! Hetty!—dear Hetty!"

"I'm here, Judith—here, on the shore, where it will be useless to follow me; as I will hide in the woods."

"Oh! Hetty, what is't you do! Remember 'tis drawing near midnight, and that the woods are filled with savages and wild beasts!"

"Neither will harm a poor half-witted girl, Judith. God is as much with me, here, as he would be in the ark, or in the hut. I am going to help my father and poor Hurry Harry; who will be tortured and slain, unless some one cares for them."

"We all care for them, and intend to-morrow to send them a flag of truce, to buy their ransom. Come back then, sister; trust to us, who have better heads than you, and who will do all we can for father."

"I know your head is better than mine, Judith, for mine is very weak, to be sure; but

I must go to father and poor Hurry. Do you and Deerslayer keep the castle, sister; leave me in the hands of God."

"God is with us all, Hetty—in the castle, or on the shore—father as well as ourselves; and it is sinful not to trust to his goodness. You can do nothing in the dark; will lose your way in the forest, and perish for want of food."

"God will not let that happen to a poor child that goes to serve her father, sister. I must try and find the savages."

"Come back, for this night only; in the morning, we will put you ashore, and leave you to do as you may think right."

"You *say* so, Judith, and you *think* so; but you would not. Your heart would soften, and you'd see tomahawks and scalping-knives in the air. Besides, I've got a thing to tell the Indian chief, that will answer all our wishes; and I'm afraid I may forget it, if I don't tell it to him at once. You'll see that he will let father go, as soon as he hears it!"

"Poor Hetty! What can *you* say to a ferocious savage, that will be likely to change his bloody purpose!"

"That which will frighten him, and make

him let father go," returned the simple-minded girl, positively. "You'll see, sister; you'll see, how soon it will bring him to, like a gentle child!"

"Will you tell *me*, Hetty, what you intend to say?" asked Deerslayer; "I know the savages well, and can form some idee how far fair words will be likely, or not, to work on their bloody natur's. If it's not suited to the gifts of a red-skin, 'twill be of no use; for reason goes by gifts, as well as conduct."

"Well, then," answered Hetty, dropping her voice to a low, confidential tone; for the stillness of the night, and the nearness of the ark permitted her to do this, and still to be heard. "Well, then, Deerslayer, as you seem a good and honest young man, I will tell *you*. I mean not to say a word to any of the savages, until I get face to face with their head chief, let them plague me with as many questions as they please; no—I'll answer none of them, unless it be to tell them to lead me to their wisest man. Then, Deerslayer, I'll tell him that God will not forgive murder, and thefts; and that if father and Hurry did go after the scalps of the Iroquois, he must return good for evil, for

so the Bible commands, else he will go into everlasting punishment. When he hears this, and feels it to be true, as feel it he must; how long will it be before he sends father, and Hurry, and me, to the shore, opposite the castle; telling us all three to go our way in peace?"

The last question was put in a triumphant manner; and then the simple-minded girl laughed at the impression she never doubted that her project had made on her auditors. Deerslayer was dumb-founded at this proof of guileless feebleness of mind; but Judith had suddenly bethought her of a means of counteracting this wild project, by acting on the very feelings that had given it birth. Without adverting to the closing question, or the laugh, therefore, she hurriedly called to her sister by name, as one suddenly impressed with the importance of what she had to say. But no answer was given to the call.

By the snapping of twigs, and the rustling of leaves, Hetty had evidently quitted the shore, and was already burying herself in the forest. To follow would have been bootless, since the darkness, as well as the dense cover

that the woods everywhere afforded, would have rendered her capture next to impossible; and there was also the never-ceasing danger of falling into the hands of their enemies. After a short and melancholy discussion, therefore, the sail was again set, and the ark pursued its course towards its habitual moorings; Deerslayer silently felicitating himself on the recovery of the canoe, and brooding over his plans for the morrow. The wind rose as the party quitted the point, and in less than an hour they reached the castle. Here all was found, as it had been left; and the reverse of the ceremonies had to be taken, in entering the building that had been used on quitting it. Judith occupied a solitary bed that night, bedewing the pillow with her tears, as she thought of the innocent and hitherto neglected creature, who had been her companion from childhood; and bitter regrets came over her mind, from more causes than one, as the weary hours passed away, making it nearly morning before she lost her recollection in sleep. Deerslayer and the Delaware took their rest in the ark, where we shall leave them enjoying the deep sleep of the honest, the healthful and fearless, to re-

turn to the girl we have last seen in the midst of the forest.

When Hetty left the shore, she took her way unhesitatingly into the woods, with a nervous apprehension of being followed. Luckily, this course was the best she could have hit on to effect her own purpose, since it was the only one that led her from the point. The night was so intensely dark, beneath the branches of the trees, that her progress was very slow, and the direction she went altogether a matter of chance, after the first few yards. The formation of the ground, however, did not permit her to deviate far from the line in which she desired to proceed. On one hand, it was soon bounded by the acclivity of the hill; while the lake, on the other, served as a guide. For two hours did this single-hearted and simple-minded girl toil through the mazes of the forest; sometimes finding herself on the brow of the bank that bounded the water, and at others struggling up an ascent that warned her to go no farther in that direction, since it necessarily ran at right angles to the course on which she wished to proceed. Her feet often slid from beneath her, and she got many falls, though

none to do her injury; but, by the end of the period mentioned, she had become so weary as to want strength to go any farther. Rest was indispensable; and she set about preparing a bed, with the readiness and coolness of one to whom the wilderness presented no unnecessary terrors. She knew that wild beasts roamed through all the adjacent forest, but animals that preyed on the human species were rare, and of dangerous serpents there were literally none. These facts had been taught her by her father; and whatever her feeble mind received at all, it received so confidingly as to leave her no uneasiness from any doubts or scepticism. To her the sublimity of the solitude in which she was placed was soothing, rather than appalling; and she gathered a bed of leaves, with as much indifference to the circumstances that would have driven the thoughts of sleep entirely from the minds of most of her sex, as if she had been preparing her place of nightly rest, beneath the paternal roof.

As soon as Hetty had collected a sufficient number of the dried leaves to protect her person from the damps of the ground, she kneeled beside the humble pile, clasped her raised hands

in an attitude of deep devotion, and in a soft, low, but audible voice, repeated the Lord's prayer. This was followed by those simple and devout verses, so familiar to children, in which she recommended her soul to God should it be called away to another state of existence, ere the return of morning. This duty done, she lay down and disposed herself to sleep. The attire of the girl, though suited to the season, was sufficiently warm for all ordinary purposes; but the forest is ever cool, and the nights of that elevated region of country have always a freshness about them, that renders clothing more necessary than is commonly the case in the summers of a low latitude. This had been foreseen by Hetty, who had brought with her a coarse heavy mantle, which, when laid over her body, answered all the useful purposes of a blanket. Thus protected, she dropped asleep in a few minutes, as tranquilly as if watched over by the guardian care of that mother, who had so recently been taken from her for ever—affording, in this particular, a most striking contrast between her own humble couch, and the sleepless pillow of her sister.

Hour passed after hour, in a tranquillity as undisturbed and a rest as sweet, as if angels

expressly commissioned for that object watched around the bed of Hetty Hutter. Not once did her soft eyes open, until the grey of the dawn came struggling through the tops of the trees, falling on their lids, and, united to the freshness of a summer's morning, giving the usual summons to awake. Ordinarily, Hetty was up ere the rays of the sun tipped the summits of the mountains; but on this occasion her fatigue had been so great, and her rest was so profound, that the customary warnings failed of their effect. The girl murmured in her sleep, threw an arm forward, smiled as gently as an infant in its cradle, but still slumbered. In making this unconscious gesture, her hand fell on some object that was warm, and in the half unconscious state in which she lay, she connected the circumstance with her habits. At the next moment a rude attack was made on her side, as if a rooting animal were thrusting its snout beneath, with a desire to force her position; and then, uttering the name of "Judith," she awoke. As the startled girl arose to a sitting attitude, she perceived that some dark object sprang from her, scattering the leaves and snapping the fallen twigs in its haste. Opening her eyes and recovering from

the first confusion and astonishment of her situation, Hetty perceived a cub, of the common American brown bear, balancing itself on its hinder legs, and still looking towards her, as if doubtful whether it would be safe to trust itself near her person again. The first impulse of Hetty, who had been mistress of several of these cubs, was to run and seize the little creature as a prize, but a loud growl warned her of the danger of such a procedure. Recoiling a few steps, the girl looked hurriedly round, and perceived the dam watching her movements, with fiery eyes, at no great distance. A hollow tree, that had once been the home of bees, having recently fallen, the mother, with two more cubs, was feasting on the dainty food that this accident had placed within her reach; while the first kept a jealous eye on the situationof its truant and reckless young.

It would exceed all the means of human knowledge to pretend to analyze the influences that govern the acts of the lower animals. On this occasion, the dam, though proverbially fierce when its young is thought to be in danger, manifested no intention to attack the girl. It quitted the honey, and advanced to a place within twenty feet of her, where it raised

itself on its hinder legs, and balanced its body in a sort of angry, growling discontent, but approached no nearer. Happily, Hetty did not fly. On the contrary, though not without terror, she knelt with her face towards the animal, and with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, repeated the prayer of the previous night. This act of devotion was not the result of alarm; but it was a duty she never neglected to perform ere she slept, and when the return of consciousness awoke her to the business of the day. As the girl arose from her knees, the bear dropped on its feet again, and collecting its cubs around her, permitted them to draw their natural sustenance. Hetty was delighted with this proof of tenderness in an animal that has but a very indifferent reputation for the gentler feelings; and as a cub would quit its mother to frisk and leap about in wantonness, she felt a strong desire again to catch it up in her arms, and play with it. But admonished by the growl, she had self-command sufficient not to put this dangerous project in execution; and, recollecting her errand among the hills, she tore herself away from the group, and proceeded on her course along the margin of the lake, of which she now

caught glimpses again through the trees. To her surprise, though not to her alarm, the family of bears arose and followed her steps, keeping a short distance behind her; apparently watching every movement, as if they had a near interest in all she did.

In this manner, escorted by the dam and cubs, the girl proceeded nearly a mile, thrice the distance she had been able to achieve in the darkness, during the same period of time. She then reached a brook that had dug a channel for itself into the earth, and went brawling into the lake, between steep and high banks, covered with trees. Here, Hetty performed her ablutions; then drinking of the pure mountain-water, she went her way, refreshed and lighter of heart, still attended by her singular companions. Her course now lay along a broad and nearly level terrace, which stretched from the top of the bank that bounded the water, to a low acclivity that rose to a second and irregular platform above. This was at a part of the valley where the mountains ran obliquely, forming the commencement of a plain that spread between the hills, southward of the sheet of water. Hetty knew by this

circumstance, that she was getting near to the encampment, and had she not, the bears would have given her warning of the vicinity of human beings. Snuffing the air, the dam refused to follow any further, though the girl looked back and invited her to come by childish signs, and even by direct appeals made in her own sweet voice. It was while making her way slowly through some bushes in this manner, with averted face and eyes riveted on the immoveable animals, that the girl suddenly found her steps arrested by a human hand, that was laid lightly on her shoulder.

"Where go?" said a soft female voice, speaking hurriedly, and in concern. "Indian—red-man—savage—wicked warrior—that-a-way."

This unexpected salutation alarmed the girl no more than the presence of the fierce inhabitants of the woods. It took her a little by surprise, it is true, but she was in a measure prepared for some such meeting; and the creature who stopped her, was as little likely to excite terror as any who ever appeared in the guise of an Indian. It was a girl, not much older than herself, whose smile was sunny as Judith's in her brightest moments, whose voice,

was melody itself, and whose accents and manner had all the rebuked gentleness that characterizes the sex among a people who habitually treat their women as the attendants and servitors of the warriors. Beauty among the women of the aboriginal Americans, before they have become exposed to the hardships of wives and mothers, is by no means uncommon. In this particular, the original owners of the country were not unlike their more civilized successors; *nature* appearing to have bestowed that delicacy of mien and outline that forms so great a charm in the youthful female, but of which they are so early deprived; and that too, as much by the habits of domestic life, as from any other cause.

The girl who had so suddenly arrested the steps of Hetty was dressed in a calico mantle, that effectually protected all the upper part of her person, while a short petticoat of blue cloth edged with gold lace, that fell no lower than her knees, leggings of the same, and moccasins of deer-skin, completed her attire. Her hair fell in long dark braids down her shoulders and back, and was parted above a low smooth forehead, in a way to soften the

expression of eyes that were full of archness and natural feeling. Her face was oval, with delicate features; the teeth were even and white, while the mouth expressed a melancholy tenderness, as if it wore this peculiar meaning in intuitive perception of the fate of a being who was doomed from birth to endure a woman's sufferings relieved by a woman's affections. Her voice, as has been already intimated, was soft as the sighing of the night air, a characteristic of the females of her race, but which was so conspicuous in herself as to have procured for her the name of Wah-ta!-Wah; which rendered into English means Hist-oh!-Hist.

In a word, this was the betrothed of Chingachgook; who having succeeded in lulling their suspicions, was permitted to wander around the encampment of her captors. This indulgence was in accordance with the general policy of the red-man, who well knew, moreover, that her trail could have been followed in the event of flight. It will also be remembered that the Iroquois, or Hurons, as it would be better to call them, were entirely ignorant of the proximity of her lover; a fact, indeed, that she did not know herself.

It is not easy to say which manifested the most self-possession at this unexpected meeting, the pale-face or the red-girl. But, though a little surprised, Wah-ta!-Wah was the most willing to speak, and far the readier in foreseeing consequences, as well as in devising means to avert them. Her father, during her childhood, had been much employed as a warrior by the authorities of the colony; and dwelling for several years near the forts, she had caught a knowledge of the English tongue, which she spoke in the usual abbreviated manner of an Indian, but fluently, and without any of the ordinary reluctance of her people.

"Where go?" repeated Wah-ta!-Wah, returning the smile of Hetty, in her own gentle winning manner; "*wicked* warrior, that-a-way —*good* warrior, far off."

"What's your name?" asked Hetty, with the simplicity of a child.

"Wah-ta!-wah. I no Mingo—good Delaware—Yengeese friend. Mingo very cruel, and love scalp for blood—Delaware love him for honour. Come here, where no eyes."

Wah-ta!-Wah now led her companion towards the lake, descending the bank so as to

place its overhanging trees and bushes between them and any probable observers; nor did she stop until they were both seated side by side, on a fallen log, one end of which actually lay buried in the water.

"*Why* you come for?" the young Indian then eagerly inquired; "*where* you come from?"

Hetty told her tale in her own simple and truth-loving manner. She explained the situation of her father, and stated her desire to serve him, and, if possible, to procure his release.

"Why your fader come to Mingo camp in night?" asked the Indian girl, with a directness which, if not borrowed from the other, partook largely of its sincerity. "He know it war-time, and he no boy—he no want beard—no want to be told Iroquois carry tomahawk, and knife, and rifle. Why he come night time, seize *me* by hair, and try to scalp Delaware girl?"

"You!" said Hetty, almost sickening with horror; "did he seize *you*—did he try to scalp *you!*"

"Why no? Delaware scalp sell for much

as Mingo scalp. Governor no tell difference. Wicked t'ing for pale-face to scalp. No his gifts, as the good Deerslayer alway tell me."

"And do *you* know the Deerslayer?" said Hetty, colouring with delight and surprise, forgetting her regrets at the moment, in the influence of this new feeling. "I know him too. He is now in the ark with Judith, and a Delaware, who is called the Big Serpent. A bold and handsome warrior is this Serpent, too!"

Spite of the rich deep colour that nature had bestowed on the Indian beauty, the tell-tale blood deepened on her cheeks, until the blush gave new animation and intelligence to her jet-black eyes. Raising a finger in an attitude of warning, she dropped her voice, already so soft and sweet, nearly to a whisper, as she continued the discourse.

"Chingachgook!" returned the Delaware girl, sighing out the harsh name, in sounds so softly guttural, as to cause it to reach the ear in melody. "His father, Uncas—great chief of the Mahicanni—next to old Tamenund! More as warrior, not so much grey hair, and less at council-fire. *You* know Serpent?"

"He joined us last evening, and was in the ark with me, for two or three hours before I left it. I'm afraid, Hist—" Hetty could not pronounce the Indian name of her new friend, but having heard Deerslayer give her this familiar appellation, she used it without any of the ceremony of civilized life; "I'm afraid, Hist, he has come after scalps, as well as my poor father and Hurry Harry!"

"Why he should'n't, ha? Chingachgook red warrior, very red—scalp make his honour—be sure he take him."

"Then," said Hetty, earnestly, "he will be as wicked as any other. God will not pardon in a red man, what he will not pardon in a white man."

"No true," returned the Delaware girl, with a warmth that nearly amounted to passion; "no true, I tell you! The Manitou smile and please when he see young warrior come back from the war-path, with two, ten, hundred scalp on a pole! Chingachgook father take scalp, grandfather take scalp—all old chief take scalp; and Chingachgook take as many scalp as he can carry himself!"

"Then, Hist, his sleep of nights must be

terrible to think of! No one can be cruel, and hope to be forgiven."

"No cruel—plenty forgiven," returned Wahta!-Wah, stamping her little foot on the stony strand, and shaking her head in a way to show how completely feminine feeling in one of its aspects had gotten the better of feminine feeling in another. "I tell you, Serpent brave; he go home this time with four, yes, *two* scalp."

"And is that his errand here? Did he really come all this distance, across mountains and valley, rivers and lakes, to' torment his fellow-creatures, and do so wicked a thing?"

This question at once appeased the growing ire of the half-offended Indian beauty. It completely got the better of the prejudices of education, and turned all her thoughts to a gentler and more feminine channel. At first she looked around her suspiciously, as if distrusting eavesdroppers; then she gazed wistfully into the face of her attentive companion; after which, this exhibition of girlish coquetry and womanly feeling terminated by her covering her face with both her hands, and laughing in a strain that might well be termed the melody of the woods. Dread of discovery, however, soon put a stop

to this *naïve* exhibition of feeling, and removing her hands, this creature of impulses gazed again wistfully into the face of her companion, as if inquiring how far she might trust a stranger with her secret. Although Hetty had no claim to her sister's extraordinary beauty, many thought her countenance the most winning of the two. It expressed all the undisguised sincerity of her character, and it was totally free from any of the unpleasant physical accompaniments that so frequently attend mental imbecility. It is true that one accustomed to closer observation than common, might have detected the proofs of her feebleness of intellect in the language of her sometimes vacant eyes; but they were signs that attracted sympathy by their total want of guile, rather than any other feeling. The effect on Hist, to use the English and more familiar translation of the name, was favourable; and yielding to an impulse of tenderness, she threw her arms around Hetty, and embraced her with an outporing emotion so natural, that it was only equalled by its warmth.

"*You* good," whispered the young Indian; "you good, I know: it so long since Wah-ta!

Wah have a friend—a sister—any body to speak her heart to! you Hist friend; don't I say trut'?"

"I never had a friend," answered Hetty, returning the warm embrace with unfeigned earnestness; "I've a sister, but no friend. Judith loves me, and I love Judith; but that's natural, and as we are taught in the Bible; but I *should* like to have a *friend!* I'll be your friend, with all my heart; for I like your voice, and your smile, and your way of thinking in every thing, except about the scalps—"

"No t'ink more of him—no say more of scalp," interrupted Hist, soothingly; "you pale-face, I red-skin; we bring up different fashion. Deerslayer and Chingachgook great friend, and no the same colour; Hist and—what your name, pretty pale-face?"

"I am called Hetty, though when they spell the name in the Bible, they always spell it, Esther."

"What that make?—no good, no harm. No need to spell name at all. Moravian try to make Wah-ta!-Wah spell, but no won't let him. No good for Delaware girl to know too much—know more than warrior some time; that great shame. My name Wah-ta!-Wah—

that say Hist, in your tongue; you call him, Hist—I call him, Hetty."

These preliminaries settled to their mutual satisfaction, the two girls began to discourse of their several hopes and projects. Hetty made her new friend more fully acquainted with her intentions in behalf of her father; and to one in the least addicted to prying into the affairs of others, Hist would have betrayed her own feelings and expectations in connection with the young warrior of her own tribe. Enough was revealed on both sides, however, to let each party get a tolerable insight into the views of the other, though enough still remained in mental reservation to give rise to the following questions and answers, with which the interview in effect closed. As the quickest-witted, Hist was the first with her interrogatories. Folding an arm about the waist of Hetty, she bent her head so as to look up playfully into the face of the other; and laughing, as if her meaning were to be extracted from her looks, she spoke more plainly.

"Hetty got broder as well as fader?" she said; "why no talk of broder, as well as fader?"

"I have no brother, Hist. I had one once,

they say; but he is dead many a year, and lies buried in the lake by the side of mother."

"No got broder—got a young warrior; love him, almost as much as fader, eh? Very handsome and brave-looking; fit to be chief, if he *good* as he *seem* to be."

"It's wicked to love any man as well as I love my father, and so I strive not to do it, Hist, returned the conscientious Hetty, who knew not how to conceal an emotion by an approach to an untruth as venial as an evasion, though powerfully tempted by female shame to err; "though I sometimes think wickedness will get the better of me, if Hurry comes so often to the lake. I *must* tell you the truth, dear Hist, because you ask me; but I should fall down and die in the woods if he knew it!"

"Why he no ask you, himself? Brave looking — why not bold speaking? Young warrior ought to ask young girl; no make young girl speak first. Mingo girls too shame for *that*."

This was said indignantly, and with the generous warmth a young female of spirit would be apt to feel, at what she deemed an invasion of her sex's most valued privilege. It had little influence on the simple-minded

but also just-minded Hetty; who, though inherently feminine in all her impulses, was much more alive to the workings of her own heart, than to any of the usages with which convention has protected the sensitiveness of her sex.

"Ask me *what?*" the startled girl demanded, with a suddenness that proved how completely her fears had been aroused. "Ask me, if I like him as well as I do my own father! Oh! I hope he will never put such a question to *me*, for I should have to answer, and that would *kill* me!"

"No—no—no kill, *quite* almost," returned the other, laughing in spite of herself. "Make blush come—make shame come, too; but he no stay great while; then feel happier than ever. Young warrior must tell young girl he want to make wife, else never can live in his wigwam."

"Hurry don't want to marry me—nobody will ever want to marry me, Hist."

"How you can know? P'r'aps every body want to marry you, and by-and-bye, tongue say what heart feel. Why nobody want to marry you?"

"I am not full-witted, they say. Father

often tells me this; and so does Judith, sometimes, when she is vexed; but I shouldn't so much mind them, as I did mother. *She* said so *once;* and then she cried as if her heart would break; and so, I *know* I'm not full-witted."

Hist gazed at the gentle, simple girl for quite a minute, without speaking; when the truth appeared to flash all at once on the mind of the young Indian maid. Pity, reverence, and tenderness seemed struggling together in her breast; and then rising suddenly, she indicated a wish to her companion that she would accompany her to the camp, which was situated at no great distance. This unexpected change from the precaution that Hist had previously manifested a desire to use, in order to prevent being seen, to an open exposure of the person of her friend, arose from the perfect conviction that no Indian would harm a being whom the Great Spirit had disarmed, by depriving it of its strongest defence, reason. In this respect, nearly all unsophisticated nations resemble each other; appearing to offer spontaneously, by a feeling creditable to human nature, that protection by their own forbearance, which has

been withheld by the inscrutable wisdom of Providence. Wah-ta !-Wah, indeed, knew that in many tribes, the mentally imbecile and the mad were held in a species of religious reverence; receiving from the untutored inhabitants of the forest, respect and honours, instead of the contumely and neglect that it is their fortune to meet with among the more pretending and sophisticated.

Hetty accompanied her new friend without apprehension or reluctance. It was her wish to reach the camp; and, sustained by her motives, she felt no more concern for the consequences than did her companion herself, now the latter was apprised of the character of the protection that the pale-face maiden carried with her. Still, as they proceeded slowly along a shore that was tangled with overhanging bushes, Hetty continued the discourse, assuming the office of interrogating, which the other had instantly dropped as soon as she ascertained the character of the mind to which her questions had been addressed.

"But *you* are not half-witted," said Hetty; "and there's no reason why the Serpent should not marry you."

"Hist prisoner, and Mingo got large ear. No speak of Chingachgook when they by. Promise Hist that, good Hetty."

"I know—I know," returned Hetty, half-whispering, in her eagerness to let the other see she understood the necessity of caution. "I know—Deerslayer and the Serpent mean to get you away from the Iroquois; and you wish me not to tell the secret."

"How you know?" said Hist, hastily; vexed at the moment, that the other was not even more feeble-minded than was actually the case. "How you know? Better not to talk of any but fader and Hurry; Mingo understand *that;* he no understand *t'other.* Promise you no talk about what you no understand."

"But I *do* understand this, Hist; and so I *must* talk about it. Deerslayer as good as told father all about it, in my presence; and, as nobody told me not to listen, I overheard it all, as I did Hurry and father's discourse about the scalps."

"Very bad for pale-faces to talk about scalps, and very bad for young women to hear over! Now you love Hist, I know, Hetty, and so, among Indians, when love hardest never talk most."

"That's not the way among white people, who talk most about them they love best. I suppose it's because I'm only half-witted that I don't see the reason why it should be so different among red people."

"That what Deerslayer call their gift. One gift to talk; t'other gift to hold their tongue. Hold-tongue your gift among Mingos. If Serpent want to see Hist, so do Hetty want to see Hurry. A good girl never tell secret of a friend."

Hetty understood this appeal; and she promised the Delaware girl not to make any allusion to the presence of Chingachgook, or to the motive of his visit to the lake.

"Maybe he get off Hurry and fader as well as Hist, if let him have his way," whispered Wah-ta!-Wah to her companion, in a confiding, flattering way, just as they got near enough to the encampment to hear the voices of several of their own sex, who were apparently occupied in the usual toils of women of their class. "Think of that, Hetty, and put two, twenty finger on mouth. No get friends free without Serpent do it."

A better expedient could not have been adopted to secure the silence and discretion of

Hetty, than that which was now presented to her mind. As the liberation of her father and the young frontier-man was the great object of her adventure, she felt the connection between it and the services of the Delaware; and with an innocent laugh she nodded her head, and in the same suppressed manner, promised a due attention to the wishes of her friend. Thus assured, Hist tarried no longer, but immediately and openly led the way into the encampment of her captors.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SCHULZE AND CO., 13, POLAND STREET.

00076439

3 MAR 1979

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016